

Easter A  
Matthew 28:1-10  
April 9, 2023

*“Our Resurrection Too”*  
Rev. Dr. Brandon S. Perrine

*After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” <sup>8</sup>So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my sisters and brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”*

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What images come to mind when you think of a seminary – the place that welcomes “ordinary” human beings and transforms them into would-be ministers? As I prepared to move into the dorms, I imagined a pseudo-mythical place where folk intent on pastoring churches gathered for three to four years of intense spiritual experience, deep theological discovery, intentional communal worship, lively debate, and prayerful exploration. I imagined a place where the rough edges of worldliness and doubt would be polished away and replaced by the refined sheen of holiness and certainty.

On move-in day, my folks and I were greeted by my new R.A., Randy. Randy had tattoos covering nearly every inch of visible skin on his arms and neck. Randy had a polished chrome dome pate and no less than 6 earrings on each ear. Randy was wearing a black leather biker jacket and he peppered his speech with expletives as naturally as a southerner says “bless your heart.” Randy was not what I, or my parents, were expecting.

Despite my first impression, it didn’t take long to discover that seminarians are actually sort of nerdy, and I say so as one who now proudly wears the label. It was seminarians who taught me that the proper way to greet someone on Easter isn’t actually “*Happy Easter!*” but rather, “*Christ is risen!*” They also taught me that the proper response isn’t “*Thank you!*” but, “*Christ is risen indeed!*” Let’s try that:

Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen indeed!**

It was, however, no seminarian that announced resurrection to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, Jesus’ mother, on that first Easter morn, so long ago. Matthew’s author tells us that as the dawn was coming, they set out to see the tomb, after the long Sabbath the day before. Suddenly, the author writes, a great earthquake was felt in the silent garden as an angel, whose appearance was like lightening and whose clothes were blinding white, rolled away the stone and perched on top of it – terrifying the guards and striking fear to the women’s very core. “Do not be afraid,” it thundered, “Jesus who was crucified . . . has been raised!” As the Marys fled the tomb with fear and joy to tell the other disciples, they ran smack into Jesus. “Greetings!” he said. “Go and tell my sisters and brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.” And, apparently, they did exactly that. But Mary Magdalene didn’t stop sharing the news once she’d told the other disciples.

According to tradition, Mary Magdalene—a wealthy woman of some importance—boldly presented herself to the Emperor Tiberius Caesar in Rome to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with an

egg in hand to illustrate her message. Holding the egg out to him, she exclaimed for the first time what is now the universal Easter [greeting] among Christians, “Christ is risen!” The emperor, mocking her, said that Jesus had no more risen than the egg in her hand was red. Immediately, the egg turned red as a sign to illustrate the truth of her message.<sup>1</sup>

Whether we believe this story or not, Mary Magdalene is credited both with starting the tradition of giving colored eggs on Easter and of greeting fellow Christians with the words “Christ is risen,” which is still the common Easter greeting of Christians around the world. Let’s say it again:

Christ is risen!  
**Christ is risen indeed!**

Something about Jesus, something about her experience of the resurrection seems to have changed Mary Magdalene – imbued her with a certain boldness; helped her find her voice in a society where women were often silenced; assured her of a message of good news – that the resurrection not only conquered the grave, but conquered the imperial powers that put Jesus there in the first place; and empowered her with a purpose – to share that message. For Mary Magdalene, the resurrection was more than just an event to be remembered, it was a living power unleashed in the world to be experienced.

This morning, I’m going to make a bold claim about resurrection: if resurrection was a one-time thing just to be remembered or an event in Jesus’ life to be celebrated, then it’s not really good news at all, at least not for me. If resurrection happened just once, in a quiet garden, on a Palestinian hillside, two-thousand years ago, then there’s nothing really good about it.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Story of Mary Magdalene and the First Easter Egg,” Saintmatthew.us:  
<https://www.saintmatthew.us/documents/2020/3/MARY%20MAGDALENE%20English.pdf>.

For Mary Magdalene, resurrection meant personal joy, it meant new life for her and for women in her society, it meant having a voice and something to say – it wasn't just Jesus' resurrection, it was hers. It's my resurrection too, and yours, and it's happening now. It happens every day – in our homes, in our communities, and in our world. It's the courage for bold proclamation in the face of power and injustice, it's the hope of renewed life for lifeless hopes and dead dreams, it's the spirit that reanimates immobile communities, and it's the breath that brings new life into our world. Resurrection is more than just an event to be remembered, it is a living power unleashed in the world to be experienced.

In our lives, in our communities, among our children and in myriad other ways, resurrection is happening everywhere and we can see it, share it, and experience it for ourselves. Friends, Christ is risen! **Christ is risen indeed!** When we respond this way, we're not simply joining the throng of faithful followers who experienced a resurrected Christ, we are declaring that we too have experienced, and continue to experience resurrection and bring it to others and to our world. The power of Easter is not just in remembering Jesus' resurrection, but in experiencing our own.

Christ is risen!

**Christ is risen, indeed!**

So, let's live like this is actually good news, for us and for our world. May it be so. Amen.