

Rev. Luke C. Werre
Peace, Sun Prairie
April 16, 2006
Easter Dawn

John 20:16

MARY

He looked in her eyes and said her name.

The government is on His shoulders --He, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace --He who had grappled the very gates of hell, heaved the lewdness of every human heart, crushed the Great Dragon underfoot --He who was swallowed up by death, but then Himself swallowed up all death entirely --He who ripped open the earth's belly to make way for His grand entrance back into the world and then to be exalted to the highest place so that at his name every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

He looked into the eyes of this one woman all by herself and said, "Mary."

She had been standing outside the empty tomb, being left to herself by Peter and John who had already returned home. Confused and bewildered she didn't know what to make of it. She was certain that this was the tomb. Where could Jesus' body be? Why wasn't it still laid out on its stone shelf? Why had all this happened? Where is God? Is there a God? Everything, everything, everything is lost! There is only this bloodthirsty world whose wickedness knows no limit, this world that gorges itself on the innocent without a care, thrusting unhindered to ever new levels of grotesque immorality and violence. Were she... and John and Peter and the others now left like babes to the wolves?

It can't be. It simply can't be. He is "my Lord" she says. Nothing can really happen to him. Someone must have simply taken the body away for a while. She turned and was startled when a man

was standing right behind her. She hadn't heard him coming. He's not threatening. He sounds considerate: "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Then He said one word: Mary. And through that single word, all the love, all the familiar concern, all the cheer, all the warmth, all the grace, all the clarity, all the reviving power of the immortal, everlasting, infinite loving God were funneled into her heart.

Mary. She caught her breath. In a fraction of a second her head cleared. Everything was reversed. Instant joy almost too good to be true. Everything that seemed to loom so threateningly, so depressingly, so darkly dissipated like mist. He lives! Nothing else matters now. Everything is fine!

Jesus only spoke her name. Then she knew she had Him back. His success and her salvation were safe.

To Him it was not a waste of time to console, cheer and revive this one person all by herself. You would think He has plenty of better things to do than hang around in the garden and talk to one lowly individual. But He doesn't. To Him it is the most important thing He now does. It was reason He came from the start to suffer and die and rise again. It was so He could speak to us and call us by name and bring us salvation.

And Christ has called you by name. In the garden He said Mary. But at your Baptism He spoke your name through the mouth of the minister, and through it He communicated everything to you to belonged to Mary at that moment.

He is risen. Your sins are forgiven. Your life is saved. You have Him back, this time for good. Nothing will ever stop Him. He looked for you and found you and called you by name to tell you. He knows you by name. Nothing concerns Him more. Amen.