

Risen Christ Continues His Mission **St. Mary Magdalene** Monday, July 22, 2019 2
Cor 5:14-17; **Jn 20:1-2, 11-18** (We receive the risen Christ, who simultaneously abides within our communities, within our hearts, and at the right hand of the Father where he intercedes daily for all of our concerns.)

Mary Magdalene has been called the apostle to the apostles, and the reason is this story here about how Mary went to the apostles and **announced first that the tomb was empty, and secondly that she had seen the Lord**; those are two very different things.

Now we are in the **Gospel of John**, which is a gospel of **love** and that includes human love, it is not only the love of God for us, but the human love of Jesus and the love of the apostles, in particular Mary Magdalene and the beloved disciple.

At the beginning of the story, and incidentally this is a broken text because there's a missing part. Mary goes and tells the disciples. They immediately come with her to the tomb and then they go home, but she stays, so that part is missing. But originally she sees the stone rolled away and she goes and tells the disciples that the tomb is empty. She actually didn't see it empty; she didn't look inside. **She deduced because the stone is moved away that someone has stolen the body**; that was her deduction. Now people have asked, well why was the stone moved away? After all Jesus did not need the stone moved away for him to leave. As we know in his glorified body he was able to penetrate doors and gates and walls and so on. **So the stone was really moved away precisely to invite others to peer inside.**

Now for Mark's Gospel that's really where it ends, although later authors added a little section, but that actually ends with the peering into the empty tomb. Why? Well because the mere fact that there is a Church, **the mere fact that there is a Church itself is testimony to the resurrection of Christ.** No one would ever begin a movement based on someone who had died an ignominious death as a criminal. No one would ever start a religious movement based on his teachings. The mere fact there is a Church is itself testimony to the resurrection, which was actually perceived most clearly by Mark himself, who wrote the first gospel.

However the resurrection means something; it doesn't simply mean that Jesus rose from the dead. It means that Jesus is still in relationship with his own, and so John thought it very appropriate to explain a little bit about this, and to use Mary Magdalene as principal witness of

Jesus' continuing relationship with his people. Now that is something the Church has always believed. Our **Eucharist** itself is a participation in the body, the blood, the soul, and the divinity of the **risen Christ**. We do not receive the dying Christ or the dead Christ or the Jesus who worked miracles. **We receive the risen Christ, who simultaneously abides within our communities, within our hearts, and at the right hand of the Father where he intercedes daily for all of our concerns.** And it's most important that we understand the resurrection as the continuing ministry and mission of Christ. Mary didn't at first. At first she clung to him because emotionally she was attached to him, and thought his resurrection was a restoration of a kind. But he said, "No, don't cling to me." I have to be about my business. I have to leave. I have to go to the Father. "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and go tell my brothers that," because his work is not over. It's never over. **Christ continues his mission now through Mary and the other disciples.**

So we understand ourselves as those called to mission, receiving food for our journey to the Father from the risen one himself, guiding us, directing us in our daily walk. It's very important that we keep this in mind, that we do not sever the Eucharist from our 24/7 life. It's not as if, well, maybe once a week we can go and receive Jesus. No, once a week **we go to celebrate that Jesus, the risen Christ, is always with us strengthening us, healing us, continuing in every way his mission,** which of course we do not quite understand. And that's why we call this a "walk of faith," as St. Paul would say, "not a walk of sight."