

## Easter Day: Matthew 28: 1-10

*In my solitude you haunt me  
With reveries of days gone by  
In my solitude you taunt me  
With memories that never die*

*I sit in my chair  
Filled with despair  
Nobody could be so sad  
With gloom ev'rywhere  
I sit and I stare  
I know that I'll soon go mad*

*In my solitude  
I'm praying  
Dear Lord above  
Send back my love!*

This song may resonate well with our current experience of life, as we come together (separately) to celebrate the greatest event in the Christian year. It's a song that goes all the way back to my childhood, and happy times spent, with Mum and Dad. Yet, it was just the other day when I dreamt that these words could have been sung by Mary Magdalen in her grief for the dead Jesus Christ, rather than Billie Holiday!

Desperate loss, and grief hangs particularly heavily over us as we come to this Easter Sunday. We have all lost our freedom in so many ways, and those whom we love have been removed from our sight or worse. So perhaps we may all join in the prayer "*Dear Lord above, Send back my love.*"

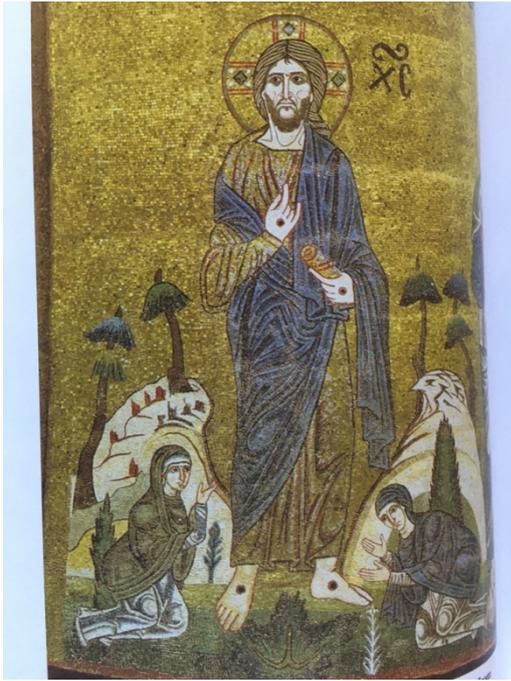
For followers of Jesus, Easter morning brings Hope, and most importantly Joy, realised! This is what is being celebrated in our Easter gospel.

If you have visited St. Mark's Basilica in Venice you may have seen this famous 12<sup>th</sup> century mosaic known as '*The Chairete*':-

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<sup>1</sup> "(In My) Solitude" was composed in 1934 by Duke Ellington, with lyrics by Eddie DeLange and Irving Mills.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/\(In\\_My\)\\_Solitude](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/(In_My)_Solitude)

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*“... Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’  
And they came to Him, took hold of His feet,  
and worshipped Him.”<sup>2</sup>*

We have come full circle when, you will recall, Mary Magdalen anointed Jesus’ feet, at Bethany, in our gospel on Monday of Holy Week. This Easter morning Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph,<sup>3</sup> are depicted worshipping Jesus. The second Mary is said to be one of the women looking on the Crucifixion from afar. However, the Early Church felt that it was more appropriate that Jesus appeared to Mary his Mother, and so the tradition grew that Jesus appeared to His mother and Mary Magdalen first.<sup>4</sup>

What is so encouraging about this passage, in what would appear to be a hopeless situation, is that the Marys’, who went to the tomb through Faith and loyalty, were met by Jesus. In all the resurrection accounts Jesus meets you and I where we are, and as we are. Whether travellers on the road to Emmaus, fisherman at the end of an unproductive and tiring nights fishing, or full of doubts like Thomas. Jesus comes to us, perhaps when we least expect it, in the darkest and most hopeless aspects of our lives. He says ‘Rejoice!’ ‘Do not be afraid’, and then He tells us how things will be. We are alone no more!

Solitude can haunt us: Especially when life is hard to bear. It is perhaps too easy to look back at days gone by with ‘reverie’ or ‘sit in [our] chair filled with despair’. We have a living Faith, if we could just be open to God and His Spirit. There are times when reason is properly laid aside, but because Faith is a

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 28: 9

<sup>3</sup> According to Bp Richard Harries p.62 *The Passion in Art*

<sup>4</sup> Ramanos a 6<sup>th</sup> century poet in a poem on Mary’s lamentation has a passage where Mary meets Jesus on His way to the Cross where He tells her ‘Courage Mother because you will see me first on my coming from the tomb.’ Brian Young *The Villein’s Bible*, p.117

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burning torch, burning with Love and Hope. We can travel what seems an infinite distance through the darkest, bleakest periods of our lives sustained by the life giving fountain of God's love for us.

I end with the words of Edith Stein (St. Benedicta of the Cross) as I began this Holy Week:

*“Divine life is love, overflowing, lavish freely self-giving love. Love that heals what is sick and awakens to life what is dead. Love that protects and cherishes, nourishes, grieves and is joyful with the joyous, that is helpful to every creature, so that it may become what the Father has destined it to be.”<sup>5</sup> Edith Stein, Carmelite Nun*

This is the message of Easter.

May God continue to Bless and protect you.

Yours in the Risen Christ

*Christopher*  
Rector

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<sup>5</sup> The God of Our Deepest Longings, Peter van Breemen, S.J. p.69