



Easter – Dawn of Life and Love

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At the heart of Easter – its ancient name, its timeless source, its life-bearing essence – lies the dawn. And this, all four evangelists knew well. These are the facts handed down by them, facts embellished and transformed by memory, ever selective memory, intuitively knowing what is important and what is not.

For the women this dawn is full of urgency – one last bonding with Jesus, one last moment to cherish and honor all that he had meant – and would always mean – to them. The absence of his body



terrifies them. But they move from horror to enlightenment, a radically new experience of his surviving presence, and an incredibly joyous sense of mission.

For the two unnamed disciples who decide to quit the painful scene altogether, a long trek begun at first light becomes a journey of enlightenment. They learn the cycle of womb to tomb, of darkness birthing light, of death and decay as an integral part of new energy and new life. They learn the paradox of transformation

manifested in the Risen Christ – and they begin to be sustained at every step of life's journey by the Word and the Breaking of Bread.

The dawn of understanding for the 'twelve' (now – and, temporarily, eleven), begins badly enough. Paradoxically, it is mild, tolerant Luke, who calls a spade, a spade. He writes, "*Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*" To this shocking statement, the much later narrative of John adds the story of doubting Thomas and the restless mournful fishing trip of eleven down-hearted 'soon-to-be' apostles.



At dawn also, the weeping despair of Mary Magdalene drives her into the garden. One word is enough for her, the word *'Mary'* – her name, understood now for the first time. She knows then what all of us learn slowly, year by year. And she responds with the Aramaic word *'Rabbouni,'* a term of endearment for a revered teacher of wisdom, but also, for Magdalen, the life-bearing seed of everlasting faith and mission.

Finally, the whole resurrection narrative is capped by the tale of Peter at an early morning breakfast by the sea. To him, Jesus poses an amazingly simple question: *"Peter, do you love me?"* A door is opened forever. It gives Peter the chance to say the one thing he is longing most to say. It gives Jesus the chance to focus us – once and for all – on the astounding outpoured gratuitous love unleashed in our universe by the paschal mystery.

We are 21st century Easter people. Einstein has told us that matter and energy dance interchangeably in a wild variety of relationships throughout the known universe. He called some of them 'spooky' because to date we haven't any rational explanations for them.

Einstein's almost exact contemporary, the French Jesuit, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, intuited with unspeakable joy the continuum of matter and energy but added grace, the freely given, awesome outflow of God's love shining throughout that same universe.

And so, we are invited every year on this feast of the Resurrected Christ to know that ALL IS ONE. We are called to let go of some of our barriers and to plunge into the complex flow of divine love energy. In other words, let us open ourselves to let God's overwhelming and endless love flow into us and through us and out of us into real and ordinary people close at hand and thence out into the vast exploding universe.

Oh, and Happy Easter ONE and ALL.