

Minor Festivals: St. Mary Magdalene, July 22

No More Tears!

Tears accompany us throughout our lives. Although newborns don't shed tears until they're a couple of months old, nevertheless they enter this world crying. It's a good cry because it shows their lungs are healthy and it blows out the tubes. Off course, at the sound of a newborn's cry, the parent's eyes begin to flow with tears of joy. It doesn't take long for babies to cry out of anger when things don't go their way, or out of pain when they bang their head on something, or out of frustration when they can't accomplish what they want to. A loud noise can cause tears of shock to flow. When that baby receives his/her high school diploma, tears of pride well up in mom and dad's eyes. One thing we all experience which causes us to shed tears is death—either the death of a loved one or facing our own death. Why? Because death is not natural—God didn't create the body and soul to be separated. Rather, death is the result of the sin Adam and Eve brought into the world. Another reason death provokes tears is because it is so permanent—death permanently separates us from our loved ones while we are on this earth.

That's the situation Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus had driven seven demons, was in on Easter morning. Death had separated her from her dear Lord. She stood outside the tomb crying. Not only was Jesus dead, but now his body was missing. Was this the job of grave-robbers? In her distress, she bent over and looked into the tomb. She saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" As if to tell her, "Look at the evidence." What evidence was there that Jesus had risen from the dead? The strips of linen that had been wrapped around his body had simply collapsed when Jesus rose from the dead and passed through them, like a tent collapses when its pole is pulled out. The burial cloth that had been around his head was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. This was no job of grave-robbers. The evidence pointed to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

But Mary's sorrow blurred the evidence and she was inconsolable. "They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him," she lamented. Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't realize it was Jesus. He said, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" She thought he was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus replied, "Mary." In an instant her tears were dried. Her grief was replaced with delight. Instead of crying, she blurted out, "Rabboni!" (which means teacher).

Her Lord was alive and all was well. A living Jesus dries the tears of all who mourn. Yes, because we live in a sin-filled world, we all face death—those of our loved ones and our own. But by his death on the cross Jesus conquered death for us. His empty tomb proclaims his words are true when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." God's children never die—they just move from the church on earth to the church in heaven where eventually all of God's children will be reunited forever. "They are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 7:15-17)

For me to live is Jesus; To die is gain for me. So, when my Savior pleases, I meet death willingly.

For Christ, my Lord and brother, I leave this world so dim And gladly seek another, Where I shall be with him.

My woes are nearly over Though long and dark the road; My sin his merits cover, And I have peace with God.

In my last hour, oh, grant me A slumber soft and still, No doubts to vex or haunt me, Safe anchored in your will.

Amen! For Christ my Savior Will grant this unto me. Your Spirit lead me ever That I fare happily.

Pastor Zuberbier

After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read John Chapter 20.