

Easter Day Tomb Watch

John 20:1-18

We enter Easter Day, not with joy and excitement but in mourning. As we make our way through the dark of the early morning to the cave where our Lord's body has been laid we hold within us grief and desolation.

- ❖ Have you ever felt as though your world has closed in on you just as the stone closed the dark tomb, trapped and without hope?

Joyce Rupp writes:

Easter is about "tomb watches" It is about love that keeps vigil and waits and believes in life, no matter how dark

and empty and cold the inner space feels.

Easter is about hope that is willing to sit in the tomb while it trusts in transformation. Easter is about faithful companions who keep watch with us and cheer us on as we wait for our inner resurrection. She suggests: Maybe our "tomb watch" is our becoming an angel of vigil, attending someone else in pain. Maybe the vigil we keep is for the people of our world as we weep for their woe or for the Earth herself as she continues to experience humanity's reckless waste and the crime of greed.



Out of the Ordinary, P82,83 Joyce Rupp

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- ❖ Is there a person or situation calling you to keep a 'tomb watch' this Easter?

The Empty Tomb

On arriving at the cave, Mary finds an empty tomb with the stone rolled back. She rushes to tell Peter and another disciple and they too go to look. They are puzzled and do not understand what has happened. Initially, the empty tomb seems to add to their grief and confusion. While the other disciple believed that the tomb was empty, did he realise just what this really meant, that Jesus was alive? They return home, leaving Mary weeping in the garden.

- ❖ Bewilderment, disbelief, shock!

How can those early disciples make sense of the empty tomb? What does it represent for them... for us?



- ❖ How do we deal with mystery, when we simply don't understand what is happening or maybe we have lost a sense of the presence of the Sacred and feel quite lost?

- ❖ Can you recall a time when you felt totally out of your depth, in denial about what has happened, confused, in limbo... To whom did you turn for solace & comfort?

- ❖ To 'see the unseen', we often have to look beyond reality with a readiness to enter into mystery, trusting that new truths will emerge & hope will be born again.

In the Garden

Mary is left alone in the garden. She dimly sees a person she takes to be the gardener and presumes he has moved Jesus' body. "Sir, ... tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away." Mary still cannot comprehend that Jesus is alive, that he has risen! It took Jesus naming her, 'Mary!' for her to recognise him.

- ❖ Imagine Jesus is standing near and calling you by name? What might it mean for you to hear him name you personally?

Jesus said to Mary, "Do not hold onto me..." In a meditation on this passage it is suggested: *I didn't understand at first why he told me not to hold onto him... Jesus wanted me to let go of the limitations of the past, my preconceived ideas of the world. He offered me a new vision; an image of life filled with the glory and power of God. By letting go, I could move into this new world of freedom and joy.*

Encounters with Jesus P75, Joint Board of Christian Education 1992

- ❖ How might Jesus be calling you personally, and also our faith community, to let go of old, comfortable ways of being and doing and be willing to explore new experiences and expressions of faith this Easter?
- ❖ Gardens can be special places in which to meditate. Perhaps you could take some time during the Easter weekend, or in the coming weeks, to find a quiet spot in a garden or bush setting where you can simply be present with the Holy One.



Continuing the garden theme, you might like to plant some bulbs. They will take time beneath the soil and you might even forget where you have planted them. Yet in the dark changes are taking place within the bulbs as they prepare to shoot out of their earthen tomb towards the light.

Risen One,
come. meet me in the garden of my life.
Lure me into elation.
Revive my silent hope.
Coax my dormant dreams
Raise up my neglected gratitude.
Entice my tired enthusiasm.
Give life to my faltering relationships.
Roll back the stone of my indifference.
Unwrap the deadness in my spiritual life.
Impart heartiness in my work.

Risen One,
send me forth as a disciple of your unwavering love,
a messenger of your unlimited joy.

Resurrected One,
may I become even more convinced
that your presence lives on,
and on, and on,
and on.
Awaken me!
Awaken me!

Out of the Ordinary, P84 Joyce Rupp