



After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. .. the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Matthew 28:1, 5-10

Mary and Mary were running to do what the angel told them to do, but when they "ran" into Jesus, they stopped to worship, not to quit and redirect their mission.

They worshipped, received reassurance from Jesus, then got right back to fulfilling their urgent mission and vocation to be bearers of the good news of Jesus' resurrection.

Living in an honour based society, and under the rule of an occupying regime, Mary and Mary longed for freedom from the conventions of a culture and society in which their existence was inconsequential, except in the ways they could be of aid to the honor, wealth and wellbeing of a man. Jesus' teaching and ministry offered a countercultural way of life based in doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God. Jesus promised that his death would lead to life, that the conventions of the natural world and of unjust ways of people were no match for his love and the power of God. How could that be?

They couldn't understand it, but they believed him. They wanted this joyful and liberating vision and mission of the Divine. In faith and hope, in the depths of their fear and grief, they went to see Jesus, to see what Resurrection looked like.

Beloveds,

In these times of such turmoil and uncertainty, like Mary and Mary; full of fear and joy and in a hurry to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection, remember to stop, to worship and reconnect. This is urgent and longed for news in a world beset by the greed of the powerful, and oppressive, bigoted and racist regimes, that rely on violence, lies, intimidation, and warmongering.

I offer a special thank you to all the clergy and lay leaders who prepared liturgies, sermons, and bulletins; choir directors, and

people who selected music, and choirs; ushers and organizers and providers of food. Your efforts and ministry this Holy Week and Easter are gifts which provide connection and strengthening for your communities and this Diocesan Household. Your efforts help us to stay faithful to our vocation to live and share the hope of resurrection.

We come from a people who continually find their way back to their countercultural mission through scripture, worship and prayer.

I pray that as you look for the resurrected Jesus, and witness to his love, may you grow in your capacity to embrace uncertainty and learn to hold multiple realities in tension. May you discover how this tension creates new reality and space for creativity and new possibilities.

When you are afraid, may you find the strengthening joy of Community and Worship. May your worship of the risen Christ keep you grounded in our mission to go with haste to show and tell the world:

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Shannon MacVean-Brown
11th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont