

## **50 Days and then Eternity**

**April 4, 2021 Scott Gunn**

Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” —John 20:15b

Mary Magdalene had come to the tomb early, even before the dawn. While she may well have harbored hope in Jesus’s predictions that he would be raised to life on the third day, on this early morning she was there for more quotidian aims. The other gospels tell us she was there with spices and ointment to care for the body of Jesus. John is silent on her purpose. Maybe she had come for the simple reason of grieving her rabbi and friend.

Reading back with our lens, we might wonder how it is that Mary didn’t recognize Jesus. Imagine in our time if you attended the funeral of a beloved friend and then saw your friend standing on the sidewalk a couple of days later. I don’t know about you, but my mind would have trouble making sense of this “impossible” sight.

Mary saw the impossible. Or so it seemed. And this is the very heart of the Easter mystery. Jesus Christ—who had been stone-cold dead—is raised to new life. It is impossible, and yet it happened.

Easter is not for the faint of heart. If we can, like Mary, grasp the majestic truth of Easter, we can begin to believe that everything we think we know about the universe is changed. Death is not the end. Evil does not triumph. Might does not assure victory. Fear cannot reign supreme.

Thanks be to God we have a fifty-day season ahead of us to celebrate the joy and the triumph of Easter. We can retell the story of the empty tomb. We can see how belief in the impossible shaped the lives of those first disciples of Jesus. We can begin to glimpse the possibilities for our world if death, evil, might, and fear do not get the last word. We can see what it means for ourselves to be baptized into Christ’s death and raised to new life in him.

We are embarking on a great journey. If we can overturn our notions of what is possible, we might find that the journey is not just the next fifty days or even an entire lifetime. Our Easter journey leads to a glorious, eternal life to come.