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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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John 20 (The Message) Resurrection!

¹⁻² Early in the morning on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone was moved away from the entrance. ¹¹⁻¹³ Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she knelt to look into the tomb and saw two angels sitting there, dressed in white, one at the head, the other at the foot of where Jesus' body had been laid. They said to her, "Woman, why do you weep?" ¹³⁻¹⁴ "They took my Master," she said, "and I don't know where they put him." After she said this, she turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she didn't recognize him. ¹⁶ Jesus said, "Mary." Turning to face him, she said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" meaning "Teacher!"

To Believe

¹⁹⁻²⁰ Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but, fearful of the Jews, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you." Then he showed them his hands and side. ²⁰⁻²¹ The disciples, seeing the Master with their own eyes, were exuberant. Jesus repeated his greeting: "Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me, I send you."

Greetings & Blessings:

During Holy Week Jesus had been staying at night with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (whom he had raised from the dead) in their home in Bethany which was just a short walk outside of Jerusalem. These were some of Jesus' friends with whom he had shared many experiences during his 3 years of ministry. According to John this was the Mary who had anointed Jesus' feet with the jar of pure nard during a dinner party. This was probably also the same Mary who went to the tomb early in the morning to anoint his body with burial spices which no one had been able to do on the day of his crucifixion because of the onset of darkness and the beginning of the Sabbath. Mary then was the first to meet the risen Christ when he called her by name in the garden of the tomb. Mary obviously had a very close friendship with Jesus.

Imagine if you can the despair, grief and confusion that all his friends were still feeling on that morning. The words of his promised rising from the dead weren't real at that moment. After all this had never happened before (nor since). It was too much to grasp, especially in the time of their immediate grief. Their best friend was apparently gone, and their human minds could not yet conceive what was to happen next. I doubt that any of us would had felt any differently.

Young people in our own time have a short form that they use which perhaps we can today give new meaning. They refer to a particularly close friend as a 'BFF'. By these letters they mean 'Best Friend Forever'. Only one problem. They don't think of this to really mean, 'Best Friend for all Eternity'. But Jesus did. When he said 'forever' he really meant it. This was the wonderful truth that Mary and her companions, and the disciples, and eventually billions of Christian Faithful were about to learn.

Jesus was and is truly our 'Best Friend Forever'. That is an important part of the Easter Message.

He is alive. And always will be. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And we, his BFF's, will live forever and for always in his presence because of his redeeming death, his powerful resurrection and his ultimate rising to be with his Father and our Father until he comes again.

Amen

(Rev.) John McGurrin