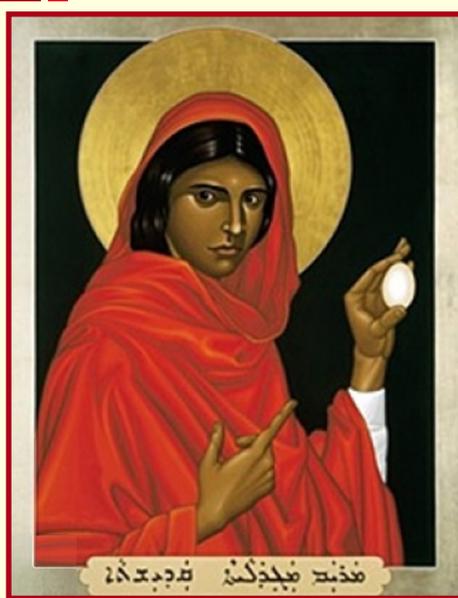


Reflection from the Superior General

The Easter Season proclaims New Life, most especially our New Life in Christ. However, sometimes we seem to be challenged to discover this new life in our actual circumstances. As one Marist commented recently: "I don't have much energy left in my Marist tank".

During this Easter Sunday we are hearing the story of Mary Magdalene from John's Gospel. Mary Magdalene's faith-journey can lead us to New Life in Christ, especially when we might seem low on our energy to keep going out to proclaim the Good News in our Marist Way.



Mary Magdalene had to face up to her fears – "they have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him" – and the blocks to her coming to meet the Lord. "Who will roll the stone away?" We Marists, too, are called to name and confront the fears and blockages that weigh us down, obstructing the New Life in Christ, blessing us with renewed energy to embrace our Marist vocation. The tomb, empty now of the wounded past, breathes forth new life when Mary Magdalene confronts those fears that obstruct her.

Mary met the Lord whom she mistook for the gardener. This "gardener" reminds us of the garden in our tradition – Eden, Gethsemane, the garden of the empty tomb. Contemplating our God reflected in the beauty of the created world can nourish our new life in Christ.

Mary heard of the Risen Christ in her encounter with the two young men sitting "where the body of Jesus had been laid". When we allow our encounters to move beyond the mundane to touch upon our deepest concerns then these encounters can participate in our sharing in the transcendent presence of the Risen Christ. Profound encounters enable us to become "angels" for each other, reminding us that: "He is not here. He is risen".

Mary Magdalene receives her own particular mission when she hears the Lord address her with her unique name and he commissions her to go and tell the Apostles that he is Risen and he wants to meet with them. Mary is "the Apostle to the Apostles". Unlikely as it seems to her, she is called by name, sent on the mission to speak of her personal experience of meeting the Risen Lord. We are renewed in our Marist missionary vocation when we hear in our daily prayer the profound summons of the Lord, calling each of us by name, and receive our particular mission to speak of our personal experience of the Risen Lord to those around us. We go out to speak passionately of him whom we know personally.

There can be another source of renewal for our Marist vocation, too. Recently, while I was visiting our confreres in San Francisco, USA, I was blessed to visit both the Catholic and Episcopalian Cathedrals. I was struck by the beauty of an icon of Saint Mary Magdalene. The human spirit attempting to express the transcendence of God in beauty – art, architecture, music and literature - can also lead us to rejoice in the New Life of Christ.

May the Risen Christ, and Mary Magdalene, "the Apostle to the Apostles", breathe new life into our Marist vocation this Easter!

John Larsen s.m.