

Impact



From the worst to the best

The worst day ever. Just thinking about it takes us back to that moment, when a loved one died, a relationship was broken, a career we were passionate about was ended. Each of us has that “worst day” in the recent or distant past, that day from which we have not fully recovered, in which we still know sorrow, anger, disappointment, and darkness.

Mary Magdalene had experienced her worst day at Jesus’ crucifixion. The one whom she had come to love and in whom she put her faith had suffered and was brutally killed before her very eyes. Still reeling and weighed down by Jesus’ death, she went to the tomb with the other Mary to carry out the heavy responsibility of anointing Jesus’ body for burial.

The disciples who were walking to Emmaus had experienced their worst day, too. With Jesus’ death, their hope had died as well. “But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel.” Perhaps that is why the worst days remain in our memory so profoundly. In the moment of extreme pain, grief, and disappointment, our hope is shaken. We simply do not know how to carry on.



Jesus met Mary Magdalene and the other Mary on the way. He reassured them in the midst of their fear and told them to share the good news with the disciples. He met the two who were walking to Emmaus on their way as well, even as they were walking away from Jerusalem and the company of the other disciples. He consoled them in their dejection, and helped them understand the fullness of God’s love, which is poured out in and through Christ.

Everything changed for Mary and the disciples through an encounter with the risen Lord. They were “fearful yet overjoyed.” Their hearts burned. They did not forget their worst day, but it was redeemed through the resurrection of Jesus. They found light and hope in place of darkness.

Jesus meets us on our way, too, and wants us to encounter him in sacrament and word and the loving care of family and community. Our Lord wants us to hear his voice saying, “do not be afraid,” and be assured that we have great hope through his resurrection, the hope that our worst days - days of grief, fear, and disappointment - do not have the final word, the hope that in Christ, the best is yet to come.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad.

Faith NOW

Imagine for a moment that you have been taken back in time and have been invited to share a meal with the earliest of Christian communities. The people gather, listen to the apostles as they recount their experiences of journeying with Jesus, hear the sorrow in their voices as they tell of that horrible day when Jesus was crucified and their astonishment at the news of Jesus' resurrection. As they break bread, they remember Jesus' words at his last supper with them, when he commanded them to "do this in remembrance of me." They share how even now, they do not fully understand all Jesus said and did, and yet, they realize they are responsible for drawing others into the way that the Lord taught them, God's way of life and love.

While we cannot go back in time, we can take the witness of the apostles to heart, hear the good news of Jesus Christ as though we are hearing it for the first time, open our hearts to his love and message, and grasp more fully our responsibility to share the story with others. We, too, can devote ourselves to the apostles' teaching, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers. We, too, may be filled with awe at the wonders and signs of God's love that surround us. We may remind ourselves to be filled with gratitude, to praise God and so move others to answer the call to live as disciples and grow as good stewards, just as the first communities of believers did.

Inspired by the early community of believers

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:42-47 NRSV)

Easter every day

Easter is a day and a season and more. The impact of Easter is for every day, in every season of life and faith. In the moments when it seems the world is filled with goodness and life, we know Easter joy. In times of turmoil and sadness, we dig deep and find Easter consolation and strength. How do we live Easter every day? Learn from the gospels we hear in this Easter season:

Trust. Hear Jesus speak to you as he did the women at the tomb, "do not be afraid," and be assured that no trial or challenge is greater than the everlasting life and love of God.

Pray. Jesus listened as the disciples on the road described their sadness and disappointment. Be honest with the Lord. Trust that you can pour your heart out to him.

Believe. While we sometimes doubt or struggle to follow him, Jesus promises we will find blessing in faith. Take a step toward him today.

Share. Like Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and the early Christian communities, witness to the good news of Jesus Christ through word and action, in caring and selfless sharing.



Impact this month

Use the list to the left in reflection and commit yourself to live Easter every day. How will you:

- Turn to the Lord when you are afraid or anxious?
- Be honest with God in prayer.
- Take a step toward Jesus as a disciple.
- Share the good news through word and action?