

## Mary Magdalene

Tears are the hallmark of Mary Magdalene's grief on this day.

Tears are the hallmark of Mary Magdalene's life in ministry.

Tears are the proof the proof Mary Magdalene gives us that although we may feel grief is a journey without a destination. Mary Magdalene's tears teach us that grief is a journey through the wilderness of loss. But making that journey in that wilderness of loss we come across oasis of understanding acceptance peace and hope in the tears. Tears of grief obvious on Good Friday afternoon at the foot of the cross. Tears of grief mark Mary Magdalene's life but her tears are a real gift to us today.

By tradition, which means that in scripture her story may not be proven at every aspect but every aspect of that story is important by tradition, Mary Magdalene was the woman who washed Jesus's feet with her tears in the pharisee's house and then anointed them with the ointment that began Jesus's journey towards death and burial. Grief indeed, but those tears as she anointed Jesus feet with her tears, those tears teach us that Jesus Son of God who is God, Jesus accepts us - accepts you and me as we are and certainly he accepts us as we are and not as anyone else thinks we should be. There is a journey of grief without a destination, that we should be as anyone else thinks we should be

Jesus accepted the Magdalene as she was. By tradition a woman with a past a woman who for whatever reason her human experience of love was the very travesty, the antithesis of love that is of God. God who is love in relationships that he wants us to see as helping us flourish in love. Her tears of real grief show the wilderness of loss as she washed his feet but Jesus accepted her. He accepted the gift of her tears - the gift of herself - the gift of her real self

Jesus didn't send her away to change or question how she would change. He let her wash his feet with her tears of grief which teach us the great lesson of the cross, that God loves you and even me as I am. Tears consist of two elements: water and salt. Water - growth & life but the salt of affliction. Our Jewish friends in this past week had a bowl of salt water on the table to celebrate the Passover; the glory of the red sea; The salt of affliction

For Mary Magdalene, the salt of her reputation but in the tears that wash Jesus feet.

Acceptance by god who is love. Tears of acceptance that in our inner wilderness of grief and loss the moments when family and friends simply let

us weep and accept us. Even, especially during this past time. Down the telephone, when you can't speak for the weeping of grief. But love and acceptance doesn't need to express itself in words it can express itself in the silence even down the telephone wires. Just sit and listen to the weeping. There is the oasis of acceptance in the midst of the wilderness of loss.

And Mary's grief and tears at the death of her brother Lazarus. Jesus coming to visit his friends being moved with compassion. He raised Lazarus from the dead. Tears of Mary Magdalene the very pattern of notorious sinners - her tears moved Jesus. Jesus was moved with compassion because he understood her grief - their mourning their heartbreak and affection. Jesus understood aloud and showed that God is with us. The holy spirit, God in us often leads us to that oasis of understanding through the words of a child or a stranger the eye contact that simply but eloquently understands you need acceptance. Love - the water the tears of understanding the water the tears that bring health growth and that health and growth that brings peace true, peace true peace, an oasis in the wilderness of grief and loss. Peace that allows us to let go of the grief even especially at the foot of the cross of suffering pain. The cross of guilt and the tomb of regret. Let go! Real peace!

At the foot of the cross Mary Magdalene was there because she wanted to hang on to him. Her tears were real because they were all she had left of him. That's how her grief felt. Jesus the one man who had accepted her; understood her; loved her. Her tears allowed her to show her love, her acceptance of love, her understanding of love and her very tears allowed her to hold on to all that Jesus had given her - all that he had meant to her. She wanted to hold on to her grief Tears brought peace at the foot of the cross. She was simply with him

Mary was the one who actually sat at his feet while Martha was preparing a meal getting worried about the entertainment the preparation the doing. Mary had chosen simply to be with him. She was with him at the foot of the cross, she was with him as they laid him in the tomb. With him at his feet. Contemplation. Peace. Being with

The tomb. The place of failure disappointment - real grief. The tomb is so important in our liturgy. this week. In scripture the tomb - the emptiness of the church on Good Friday - the emptiness we feel within at our loss, real loss. I cannot give examples from the last year. My family and friends are healthy, alive. Any examples I would give of those to whom I have ministered. Any examples seem almost trivial except perhaps those of the family teenagers who are experiencing real trauma, real loss, real grief in this past year. Even then trivial to those families devastated facing the tomb of death, loss, grief.

But Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She shed tears to hold on to him. She shed tears to hold on to her grief. But god is with u. With us in the tomb as Jesus was with Mary in the garden. But she, supposing him to be the gardener amidst her tears of grief, Jesus spoke to her quietly, gently but confidently and still her tears flowed. But he spoke and the tears flowed because they became tears of joy. He lives. She knew. He lives. New light. New Life. A new reality in resurrection. Resurrection hope. Real hope.

In the midst of the tomb of our experience our memory we think of the trivial likes and words of the beloved and suddenly we are with her/him again in the laughter of how trivial. In the smile in the laughter. Tears are there as the stone is rolled away with the laughter from the tomb of anger disappointment failure we smile we laugh we know hope. Life. Growth. We know god is with us in the tears.