

Name Recognition

Scripture Reading — John 20:11-18

Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

—John 20:16 —

Mary was participating in one of the oldest dramas in the world: she stood at the grave of a loved one and wept. Many of us have been there too. And perhaps, like Mary, as grief swelled, it was hard to see Jesus in the midst of it.

In her deep sorrow, Mary didn't recognize that it was Jesus who stood near her. In fact, she mistook him for the gardener. Ironically, Mary was wrong at one level, but right at another. For Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, had come to bring order to the chaos that had invaded God's world. Jesus came to plant seeds of new creation, to uproot the thorns and thistles, the sin and pain and decay of this world—and to replace them with the blossoms of forgiveness, grace, and everlasting life.

But perhaps what is most striking about this scene is that it wasn't fanfare, lightning bolts, or the blasting of trumpets that helped Mary see her Lord. She recognized Jesus when he called her name: “Mary.”

Jesus calls your name too. In the midst of your grief, Jesus is near. He cares about your loss and pain. He lived, died, and rose again so that you might have hope and comfort, even in the depth of your sorrows. Jesus knows your name and speaks it in love. Take time today to listen and answer.

Prayer

God of grace, thank you that in Jesus we see how much you love us. Enable me to hear him speaking my name. Help me enter into the comfort of his risen presence. In his name, Amen.

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