



HAIL

REFLECTIONS ON THE
MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

MARY

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ST MARCELLIN CHAMPAGNAT

HE ROSE IN SILENCE

LET ME KEEP MY DISTANCE, ALWAYS,
FROM THOSE
WHO THINK THEY HAVE THE ANSWERS.
LET ME KEEP COMPANY ALWAYS
WITH THOSE WHO SAY
'LOOK!' AND LAUGH IN ASTONISHMENT,
AND BOW THEIR HEADS.

—Mary Oliver, from 'Mysteries, Yes' in *Evidence: Poems*

In the Gospel of Mark the Resurrection takes place in silence! There is almost something modest and ordinary about it. There was a quiet, with a stillness that only love and fear can create.

Some in the early Church apparently had difficulty with the 'silence' of Mark. The ending was too sharp and abrupt for them. How could the Resurrection, which had begun in fear, not end in joy? How could it end in silence and even fear?

But maybe resurrection faith must always include an aspect of questioning, for the Easter mystery is so dazzling; it is beyond our rational comprehension.

Indeed, Dominican Herbert McCabe was fond of saying that God is not the answer. Rather, God is the question.

God is a mystery. 'The word "God" is a label for something we do not know,' McCabe writes. As Mark Vernon reflects in an article in *The Guardian* in 2009: A mystery is not a problem. A problem is a puzzle to which techniques can be applied, intuition brought to bear, and a solution found. Science tackles problems. It's great at it. But a mystery is not amenable to that strategy. And life is littered with them. The little that we know of God is, of course, revealed definitively in Jesus of Nazareth. But have you noticed how many times in the Gospels Jesus himself asks questions, rather than gives answers? Our journey living the Paschal Mystery is often more about the questions than the answers. Pontius Pilate asks Jesus a series of questions and Jesus answers cryptically, as if to say, you are really missing the point.

The Easter Mystery moves us through the terrible suffering and death of the Son of God, a man, the profound love and courage that kept the women by his side despite their own fears, and the time in the tomb, that in-between space in which we spend much of our own lives. It invites us to rest in mystery, and then the movement to the joyful moment of Resurrection where even the disciples do not have the right set of questions anymore because they fit the old answers.

Is this not the journey of our whole lives: the movement from sorrow to courage to grief to waiting to joy, often holding elements of each at the same time?

What are the questions stirring your soul these days? Can we make space to live in them, not needing to have the answers?

We are all on a search. Jesus is Risen! Truth exists. But discovering the truth about our God, universe, Church, culture and especially ourselves, also means taking seriously Rainer Rilke's advice: 'Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.'



Ponder...

The dazzling mystery of the Resurrection is the well-founded hope which anchors our faith. What most challenges you about the Resurrection? What most excites you about this mystery?

The Easter Mystery moves us from death to life, from despair to joy, from darkness to light. Recall such 'Alleluia' moments in your own life. Did your faith inform this experience? If so, how? If not, consider why and how this might change in the future.

What are the questions stirring your soul these days? Try to identify two or three today and sit quietly in prayer for a few moments. Ask Our Lord for the grace to hold them and to live with their mystery for now.



IF YOU WANT

If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the road
pregnant with the holy, and say,
"I need shelter for the night,
please take me inside your heart, my time is so close."
Then, under the roof of your soul,
you will witness the sublime intimacy,
the divine, the Christ, taking birth forever,
as she grasps your hand for help,
for each of us is the midwife of God, each of us.
Yes there, under the dome of your being
does creation come into existence eternally,
through your womb, dear pilgrim – the sacred womb of your soul,
as God grasps our arms for help:
for each of us is his beloved servant, never far.
If you want, the Virgin will come walking down the street
pregnant with Light and sing.

—St John of the Cross