

## **Who Will Roll Away The Stone?**

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“Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb?”

Who will roll away the stone? Three women; three beloved disciples of Jesus, ask each other the question that all women, and all men ask at some time or another. Who will roll away the stone? Who will help us lift the boulder so that we can begin the uphill process of moving from death to life?

Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome had work to do. Their teacher had died and had been buried without the loving care he deserved. They were bereft. They wanted to touch that body again, run their hands over that skin, smell the scent of Jesus, and anoint him in spices so that whenever they smelled those spices they would be reminded of he who had died. They weren't ready to let him go.

And they were worried that they wouldn't be able to get to him. They were afraid that they would not be able to lift that boulder from the door of the tomb. They knew that they needed help but they had no idea who, or what, would help them. And so they asked each other “Who will roll away the stone? Who will be there to help us?”

We too, ask this question because we need help when we are grieving and when we are afraid. We need help when the burdens of our lives are pressing down on us and blocking the door of freedom. We need help when all we want to do is to touch the skin of the one we love who has left us. We need someone to lift the stone off our hearts. But we like Mary Magdalene and Mary and Salome do not know where the help will come from.

They didn't know but that didn't stop them from going forward. They didn't wait until a crew of strong people volunteered to be the movers. They didn't wait until they knew exactly what they needed to do to accomplish their task. Very early on that first day of the week, as soon as the sun had risen and they could see the path to the tomb they went. They went worrying, in fear, but also in faith that someone would roll away the stone.

What is that faith that wakes us, early in the morning, when the sky is still dark and the air cold? When everyone else in the world seems to be still asleep and we are, for all intents and purposes, alone with our thoughts, our worries, our fears? What is that faith, that doubting, worrying, fearful but still compelling faith that gets us moving, one foot on the cold floor, moving one step at a time toward the future?

Grief is boundless – It touches all of us and leaves all of us wounded and sorrowful and alone. Grief grabs us in the gut, or drop by drop wears us down. Grief for a loved one now gone. Grief for a hope now dashed. Grief for a job lost, a retirement put off, a child no longer in our tentative control. Grief weighs us down but someone, something, somehow comes out of the darkness and helps us.

In our Gospel we hear that the women looked up. Somehow they had the will power and the grace to look up. And when they did, they saw that the stone had been rolled back: for it was very large. The stone was not gone. It was very large. But it was rolled back and they never knew how.

This morning we come together on this hill and we too look up and out. We see each other and we know that somehow, the stone in our own lives has been rolled back. Perhaps for you the stone is the hard winter, now gone by. Maybe it is a greater sorrow that you no longer grieve so intensely about.

Whatever it is, at some time, a miracle will happen and whatever has been weighing us down will be gone. We don't know how.

We are amazed. The women were so astonished that they fled. They asked how this could be.

Has this been true for you? Have you too given over to a faith that demands that you believe that somehow you will be helped in your life? Have you given over to a faith that helps you put first one foot and then another on the floor; day by day? Have you given over to a faith that amazes you, astonishes you, scares you, and gives you new life? Not a life with a map but a freedom that sets you running?

The stone has been moved. Halleluiah! We did not do it. Halleluiah! Jesus has fled the tomb and we too are free to go. Halleluia! This is a gift; an amazing, astonishing gift, of new life. Follow the actions of the women at the tomb. Take this gift and run. Halleluia!