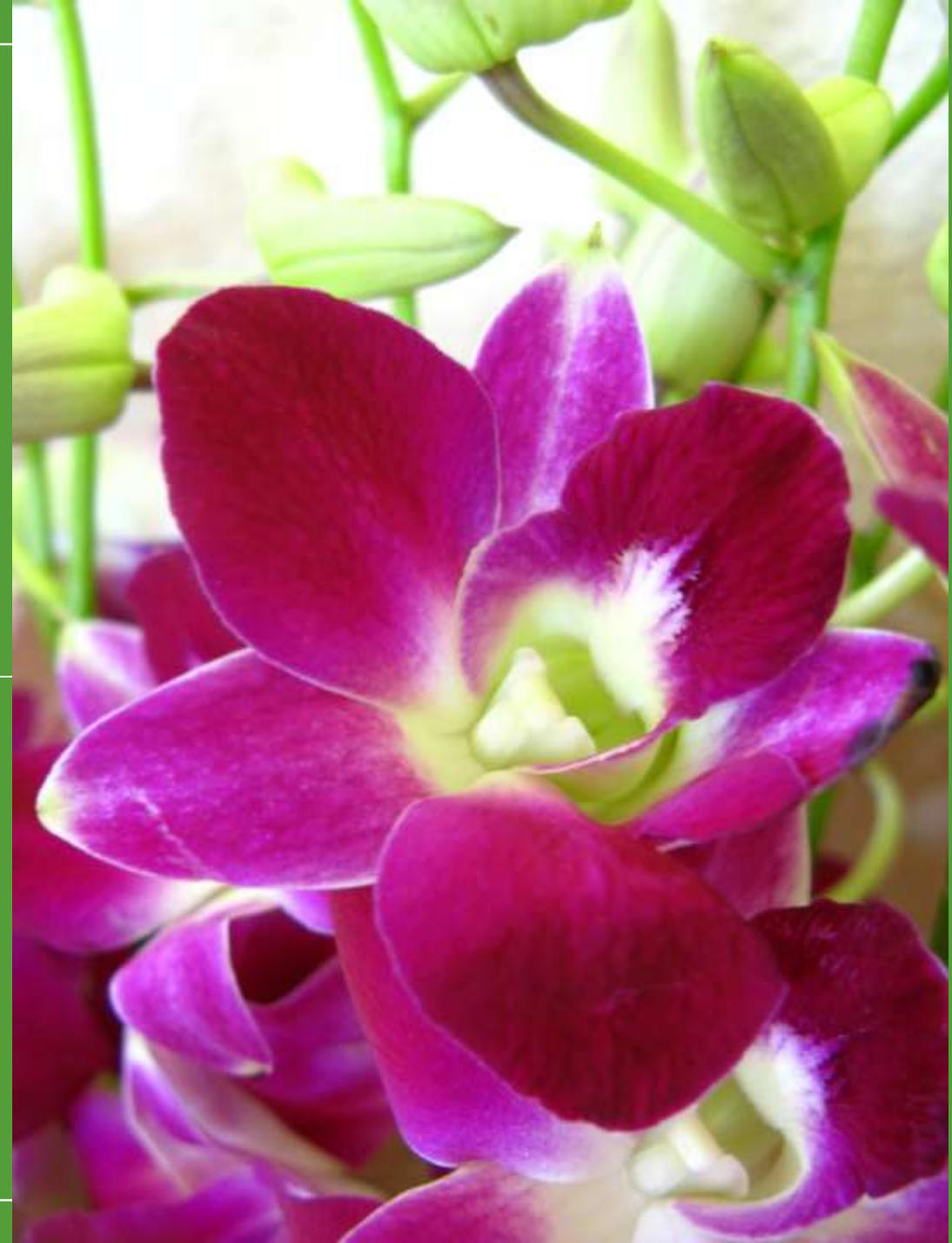


# RESURRECTION AND CONTEMPLATIO

---

The Fourth Week and Paschal  
Mystery

© 2018 Ellen Tomaszewski



# The Empty Tomb



Mary Magdalene came to the tomb on Easter in desolation.

Jesus' body was gone! She felt helpless, lost, full of grief.

She didn't recognize Jesus (Thought he was the gardener.)

# Vision Can be Deceiving



Look at this image.

Who sees a young woman?

Who sees the old woman?

**Our perceptions can deceive us.**

# Sometimes we see like Mary

- Sometimes I look at the same baby and see smelly diapers and sleepless nights instead of God's amazing creation.
- Sometimes I'm distracted and I miss the beauty of the sunrise instead of noticing the golden sunrise or beautiful sunset.



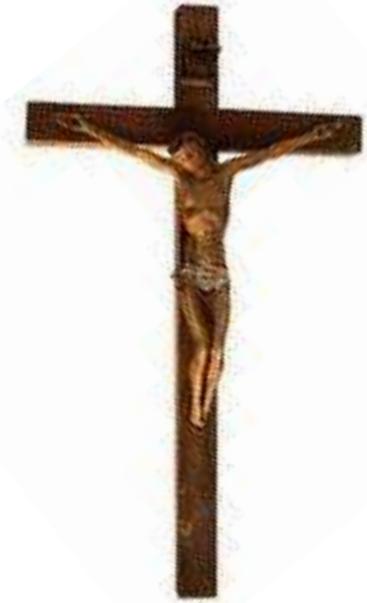
# Open your eyes!

- Christ calls us to open our eyes

The resurrection shows us how.



# What St. Paul says about pain



2 Cor. 7:10-11 reads:

- “To suffer in God’s way means changing for the better and leaves no regrets. To suffer as the world knows suffering brings death. Just look what suffering in God’s way brought you: what keenness, what explanations, what indignation, what alarm ... and what justice done!”

# How to get out of the empty tomb

- Jesus showed Mary Magdalene the way to change her view – from winter to spring, closed to open, suffering to rejoicing.
- For suffering to be redemptive, I have to take my eyes off the suffering, off of me and my pain – and see Christ resurrected.
- I stop saying, “How will this hurt me?” and instead begin to ask, “How can I bring Christ to, or find Christ in, this situation?”



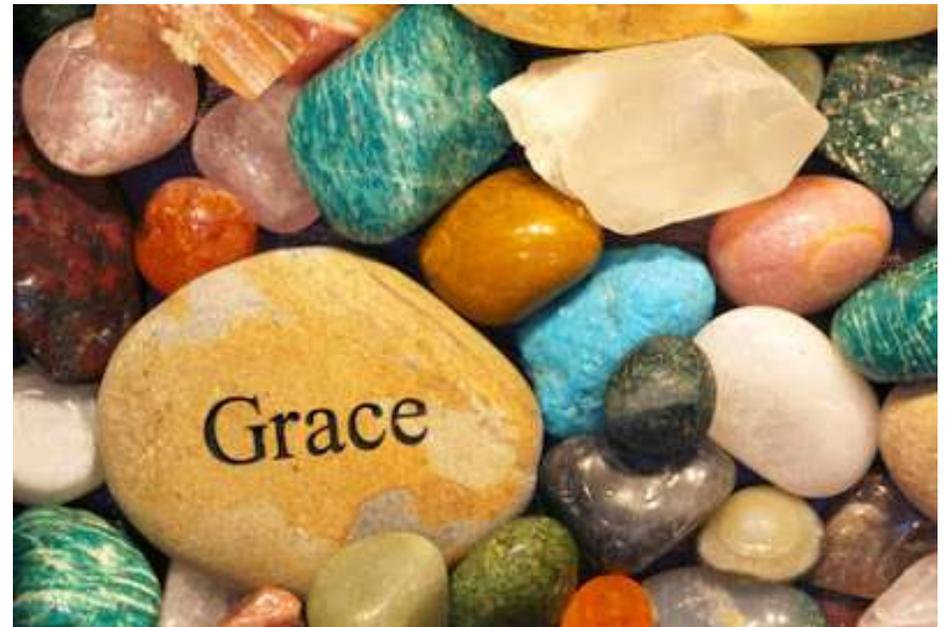
# Fourth Week



- We pray about something very personal – Jesus appearing to his mother.
- Fr. David Flemming SJ says that Ignatius choose this contemplation because Mary is the person that Jesus had the most intimate relationship with.
- The resurrection is very personal.

# Graces from the past 'weeks' of the Exercises

- The graces we asked for during the first week were shame and confusion.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week – to know, love and serve Jesus.
- For the third week, we asked for sorrow and compassion.
- Those graces pale in comparison to the intimacy called for by the risen Jesus who wants to come into our lives in a deep way.



# Paschal Mystery

- Developing intimacy with Jesus is not easy
- If we don't develop it, it's difficult for us to move from death to resurrection.
- This is the Paschal Mystery.



# Paschal Mystery



## *Joke:*

A long time ago, the priest mentioned the Paschal mystery during his homily.

My youngest daughter leaned over and whispered to me, "Mom, what IS the Pasco mystery?"

I laughed so hard I couldn't answer.

## **Author Ronald Rolheiser wrote:**

- To understand the Paschal mystery, we must separate:
  - two kinds of death
  - two kinds of life
  - and know the difference between life and spirit.

# Two Kinds of Death: Terminal and Paschal

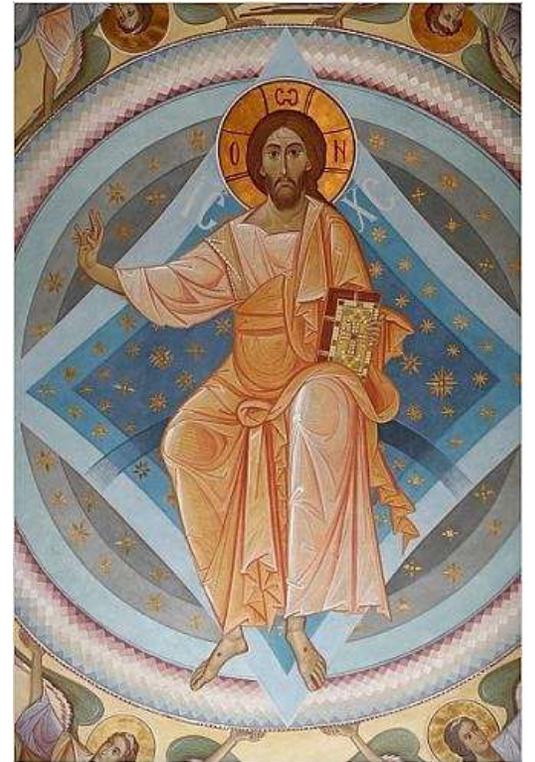
- Bodily death is once and final.
  - Life of our body ends.
  - We leave earth and go to the spiritual realm.
- Pascal death is cyclical.
  - Something ends, but something new is born.
  - deeper and richer form of life comes.
  - Like a grain of wheat planted, like a caterpillar turning into a moth, or a tadpole into a frog – these are the way a Paschal death works.

# The Resuscitated Life vs. Resurrected Life

- In resuscitated life, a person is restored to former life like Lazarus returning from death.

- Resurrected life doesn't restore the old life, but changes it. Life is new.

- Compare Jesus' resurrection to Lazarus's resuscitation.
- Lazarus got his old life back. He had to die again.
- Jesus got a new life, a richer one and he doesn't have to die again.



# Life and Spirit: Steps to Pascal Mystery

The Pascal mystery transforms us. We get both new life and new spirit.

- To think about the Pascal mystery of life, death, and rebirth, we must consider the difference between life and spirit.
- We often receive them at different times.

For example:

- After Jesus rose, the disciples got a new life of Christ.
- Later, at Pentecost, they received the spirit for the new life they were already living.
- We live in both spirit and life and our peace depends on having both.

# Steps of the Paschal Mystery

- Paschal Mystery begins with suffering and death.
- Then we receive new life.
- We spend time grieving the old and adjusting to the new
- Only after the old life has been truly let go of, the new spirit is given for life we are already living.
- We see this first in the mystery of Jesus' own Passover from death to life.

## Paschal Mystery Steps

- Good Friday – loss of life, death
- Easter Sunday – receive new life
- 40 days – Time to readjust to the new and grieve the old
- Ascension – let go of old and let it bless you
- Pentecost – receive the spirit for new life that you're already living.

# What Prevents Paschal Mystery Movement?

All these can keep us from moving from Good Friday to Pentecost

- Preconceptions
- Sins
- Nature
- Desires
- Routine



Only with the love of God can our eyes be opened, for us to see that God as the author of everything, and all is gift.

# Good Friday – Loss of Life as we know it

- In life, many things happen that cause parts of us to die. I'm sure all of you could think of a way in which you've suffered a small death of some kind. For instance, you might experience:
- The death of wholeness – you discover your child is disabled; you lose your mobility or sight.
- The death of our dreams – you realize you'll never get that promotion. You get too old to have children or to marry.



# More Paschal Deaths

- **The death of our honeymoon**
  - your ministry is just hard work
  - you get little accolades and sometimes grief
  - Your spouse wants a divorce
  - Your friend abandons you
- **The death of a certain idea** – you're hurt by members of the church, people who should love and treat you with respect just don't.
- **The death of youth** – you grow old and unable to move, live, or give as you once did
- **The death of our role in society** – your children grow up and move away, you lose a job, you get demoted, or you retire



# What happens in Paschal Death

We spend time here.

- Fret about loss, pain, and the sadness about the future.
- Mourn our loss
- Allow the sorrow
- Don't ignore our feelings

- In her essay, "The Drama of the Gifted Child" Swiss psychologist Alice Miller says that in Paschal Death, we must grieve our loss, and our bitterness.
- We have no other option because life is unfair.
- We have dreamed of lives that will never be. But this gives us a choice.

# Suffering is inevitable

- Everyone suffers at times, in body, mind, or spirit. Or all three.
- We can't escape pain.
- We can live the rest of our lives angry and bitter
- **OR: We can learn how to use it, and learn how to suffer from Jesus.**



"Mother consoles daughter after rocket attack"  
by Edi Israel. Licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 via  
Wikimedia Commons

# What to do in Paschal Death

- In the Paschal Death phase, we live in the tension of losing something important, and grieving its loss.



When in Paschal Death, we should grieve our losses abuses and deaths, but not cling to them.

My Example:

Katy is born visually impaired. I grieved, I suffered. But there was no turning back. I lost my expectation that she'd be whole and perfect.

# Easter Sunday – the reception of new life

When resurrection occurs, we have to open ourselves to that new reality.

- Jesus warned Mary Magdalene not to cling.
- He reminded her to let go of the past, of the way he used to be, of the way she knew him before.
- She had to open her eyes and recognize a new reality.

For instance, say you have a birthday and turn seventy. It hits you that your youth is gone and you mourn that for a while – the death. Then Easter Sunday arrives and you decide that life must go on. You choose to let go of your youth, and let your life change to something else.

## My Example:

With my daughter, I finally accepted that she had visual problems.

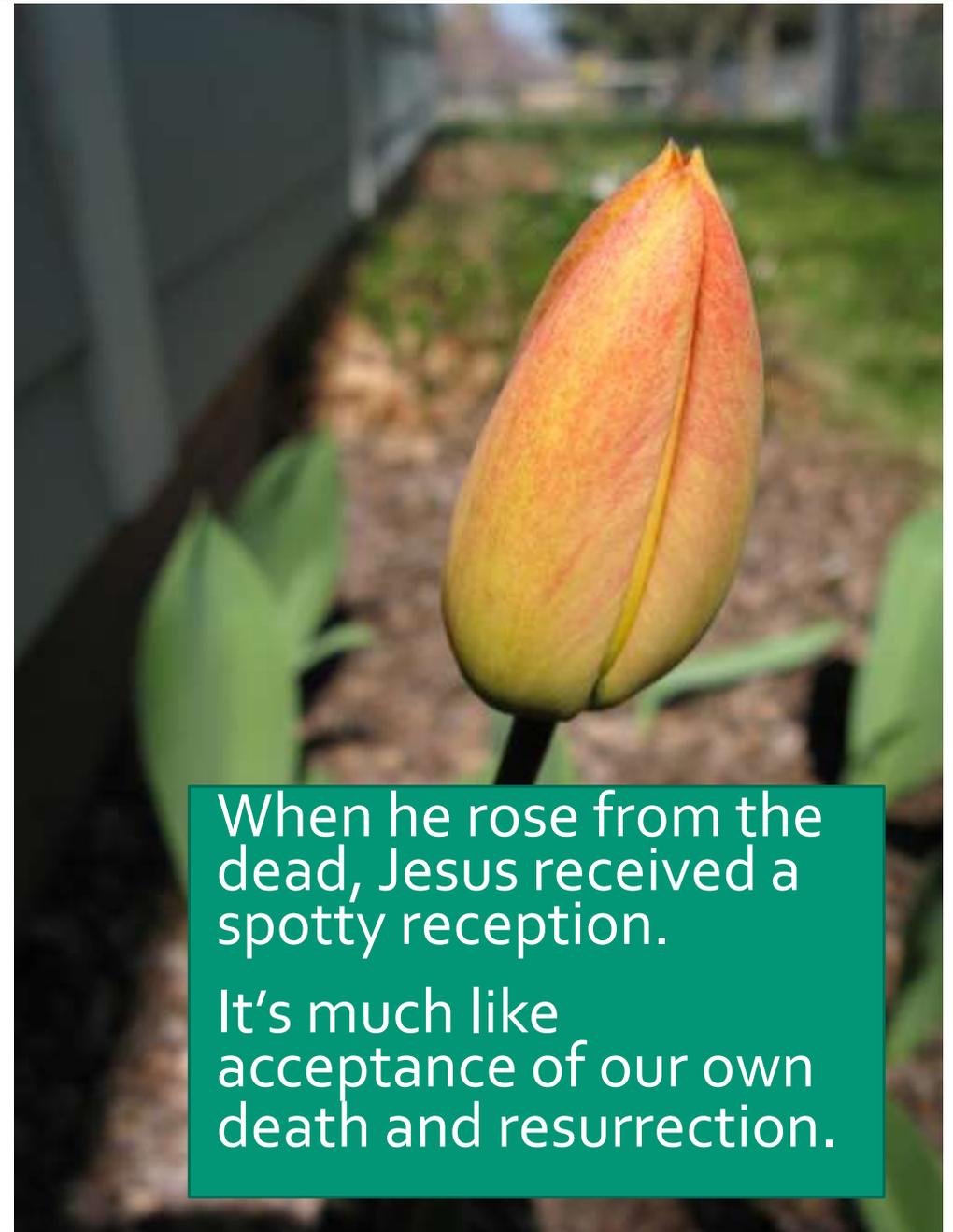
They weren't insurmountable

We discovered ways to help her.

Some days I was angry and didn't want to accept it, but other days, I did fine.

# Easter isn't the end of the Paschal Mystery

- In scripture, many people still haven't heard the truth, or don't believe even when they hear it.
- Even we have trouble remembering or believing sometimes.
- The disciples walking to Emmaus have a transformation and accept Jesus as risen. They tell the apostles, who don't quite get it yet.



When he rose from the dead, Jesus received a spotty reception.

It's much like acceptance of our own death and resurrection.

# 40 Days – Time to readjust to the new and grieve the old

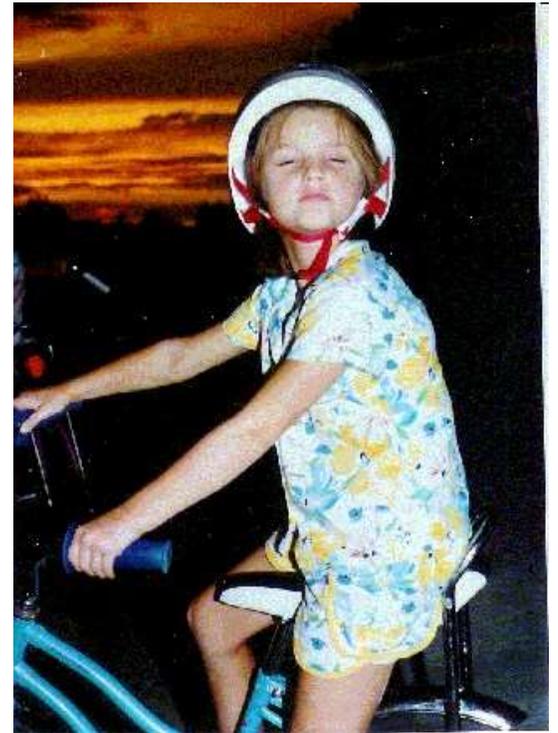
**Most days, in this phase, I can accept the new, see the resurrection, but sometimes I don't.**

- I have trouble seeing God in the dust storm, tack weed stuck in my flat bike tire, the bombing in Jerusalem, nightmares, or murder.
- I have trouble seeing the good in a broken glass, the snub of a cold shoulder, or recognizing the saving love of God there.
- Only God's love can help me do this.

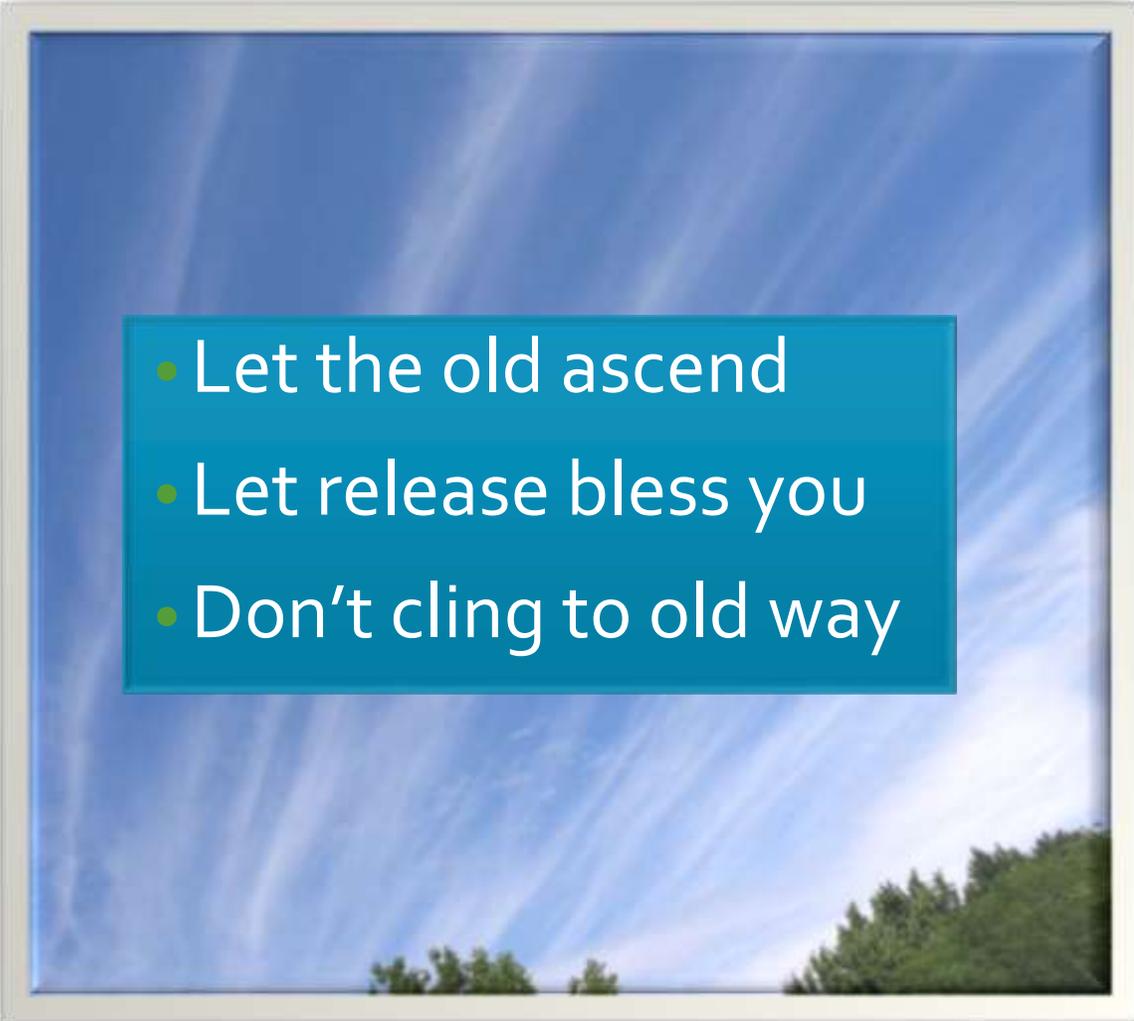


# My 40 Days Example

- During the first ten years of my daughter's life, we went to various doctors trying to diagnose her problem and adjusting to what she could and could not do.
- This part of the Paschal Mystery for me was a LOT longer than 40 days.
- While I grieved, I changed. Whenever I stopped fretting, about the pain and refocused on the gifts we were given, Christ entered the situation.
- *Story of the church windows in Portland.*



# Ascension – release the old and let it bless you

- 
- Let the old ascend
  - Let release bless you
  - Don't cling to old way

## My Example:

- I let go of my expectations.
- I don't have a perfect child; I accept that.
- I appreciate the gift she is to our family, just as she is.

# Pentecost – receive new spirit for new life that's already living in you

- Accept the spirit of the life you are living.
- Once we accept the death, the grieving, the ascension, Pentecost can happen.
- We receive the spirit for the life we're already living.



# Embracing the Paschal Mystery

- The life after a Paschal death and resurrection is different.
- We finally claim rebirth
- The disability or problem is accepted and even appreciated
- The new dream takes over
- New love develops
- We accept that we live with real people who make mistakes

When we embrace the Paschal Mystery, we begin to love like God.

# Learning to Love Like God

Years ago, I received a copy of a book by a Fr. Alvin Goodyear, S.J. about the love of God.

One of the sentences that seriously affected me was this:



- *"Love opens our eyes: it teaches us to see things beautiful and good which we can never see without it, in nature, in our fellow-men, in God: Love looks for what is lovable and finds it." (Goodyear, SJ p.99)*

# When I choose love

- I can better see the lovable parts of the beloved.
- I focus on him or her instead of my needs and me.
- When I love like God, I see the good in others that I would normally miss.



# Pessimism holds us in the empty tomb

- When my visually impaired child struggled with how people treated her, I read a lot of books about self-worth.
- The book, *The Optimistic Child* helped me understand more about thought patterns.

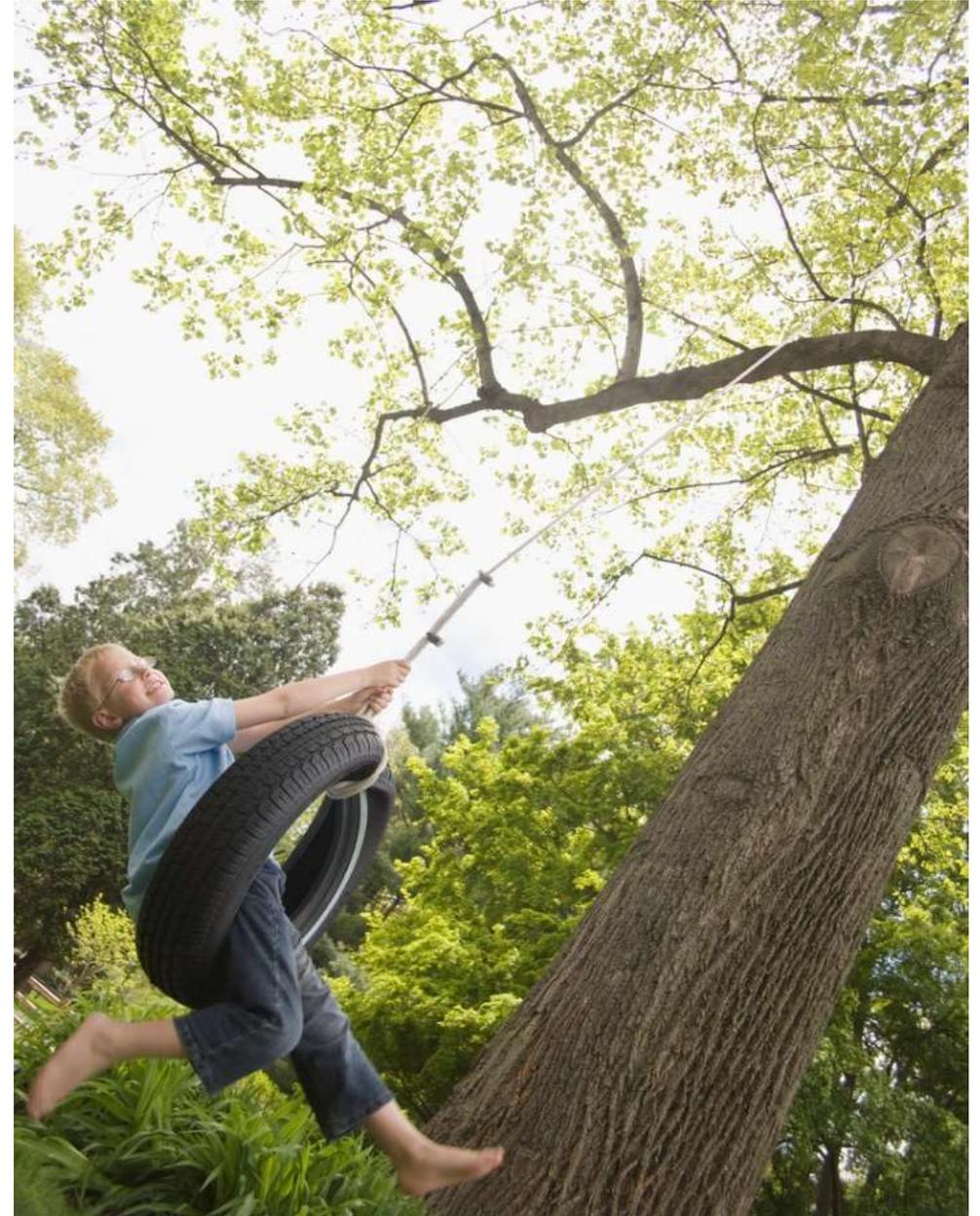
When we're pessimistic, we are like Mary Magdalene at the tomb. We look at the circumstances around us and see the worst.

We tell ourselves, "I'll never get this right." Or, "I am so stupid." Or, "Those people don't like me."

Sometimes we even reject God's goodness when we think, "I'm so bad." We see no Christ, only the empty tomb.

# Love brings Joy

- “Love can find happiness anywhere and in anything. It brings joy.” (Goodyear, SJ, 1959)
- As we commit ourselves to live for love, joy emerges.
- We see that Jesus didn't shun suffering. He embraced it, knowing it brought salvation to us all.



# How to Love like God?

1 Cor 13 tells us how.



## Love is patient and kind

- God is patient and kind with me.
- I'm still struggling, yet God keeps loving me.
- Ask yourself, are you patient and kind to those around you?
- Become patient and kind, and you're loving like God! You are changing.

# Love is always ready to excuse, trust, hope, endure – Love is ACTION

- During his life and passion, Jesus endured.
- He readily excused, trusted, and hoped even in death.
- When Jesus met the women along the way to Calvary, he told them to weep for themselves and their children, not for him.
- When on the cross, he prayed that those who killed him be forgiven, for "They know not what they do."

Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter say, "Love is more than feelings. Rather, it's a daily, even moment-by-moment decision to act lovingly."

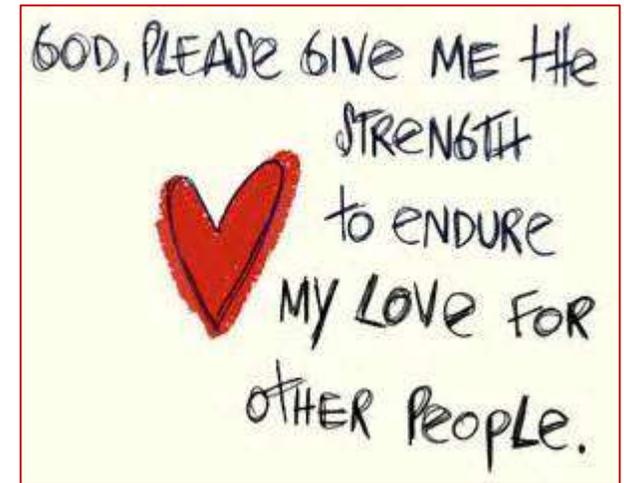
Love includes desire and sacrifice.

# Love Delights to Endure

Note: This doesn't say just endure, it says DELIGHT to endure.

I have trouble delighting to endure. My natural reaction to adversity is to *complain*.

- During the resurrection, I can look at myself and focus on me, recognize my own joy that my sins are forgiven and I am redeemed
- OR - I can look to Jesus and experience his joy that he conquered sin.

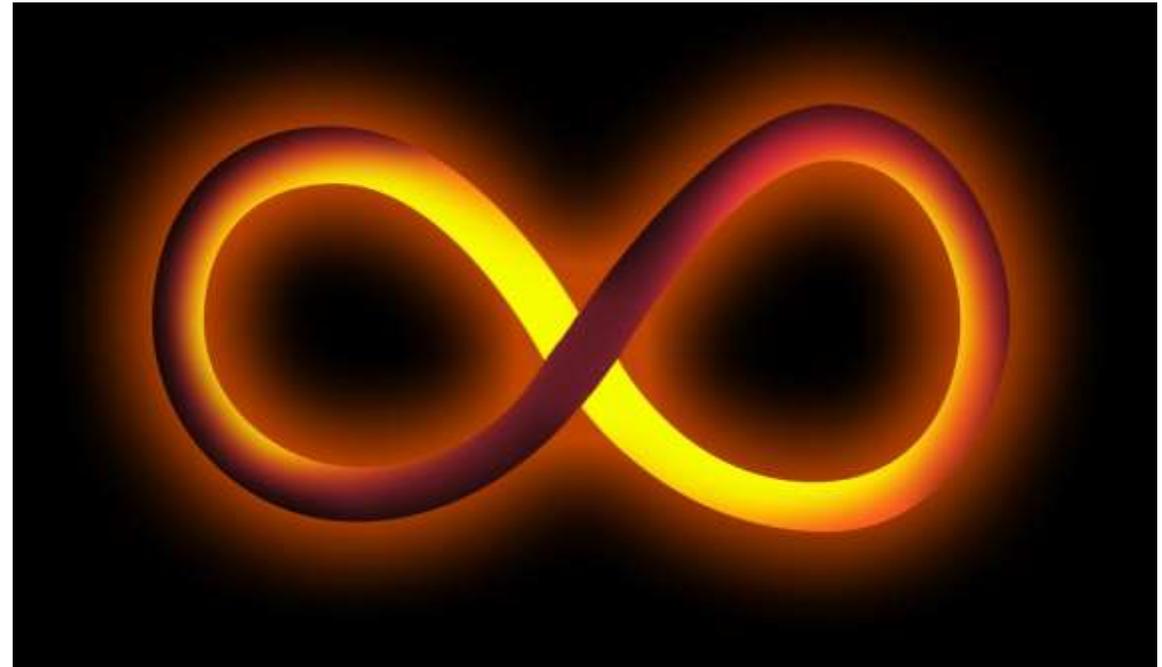


In the contemplation of God's Love, we are challenged to look beyond our own desires, and love as God loves -- with passion, with joy, totally other-centered.

This type of joy comes from God.

# Love Does Not Come to an End

- This can seem like a major burden.
- Once we begin loving, we can't stop.
- Our culture promotes abortion over adoption, for instance. We seem to know deep inside that that once we start loving, we can't stop.



Love Does Not take Offense. It is not  
Resentful. Love takes no pleasure in others'  
sins, but delights in the truth.

- In other words, love kills self.
- It produces spiritual "detachment" or what Ignatius called "indifference."
- True love of others puts God where our selfishness used to be.



# Love is Never Jealous, Never Boastful or Conceited. Never Rude or Selfish

Jealousy, boasting, rudeness, conceitedness, or selfishness have no place in loving like God loves.

- Current love songs tout some of these very attributes as "love"
- We might be tempted to believe they really are love.
- Fortunately for us, the apostle Paul helped set us straight

# Summary

- Only when I allow Christ to help me turn away from the tomb and look at the resurrection am I able to love like God.
- When I see God's loving creation in everything, (even in what I once thought to be ugly, painful, boring, mundane, stupid, hurtful, or disappointing) my focus shifts.

When I see the world from God's point of view, my ability to love increases.

# More Summary

- When I embrace the cross and resurrection, I participate in God's love more fully.
- We learn to love like God when we suffer for love. I turn my eyes from self to God, and find joy in suffering.
- When I love like God, I let my struggle become self-giving.
- The Paschal Mystery repeats itself, sometimes daily.
- Our happiness depends on our willingness to enter into the mystery.

Love opens our eyes to a new way of thinking and living – and seeing as God sees.

# *Mary Magdala's Easter Prayer*

*Ronald Rolheiser - Forgotten Among the Lilies (p 176)*

Mary explains it this way:

I never suspected Resurrection

To be so painful

To leave me weeping with joy

To have met you, alive and  
smiling, outside an empty  
tomb

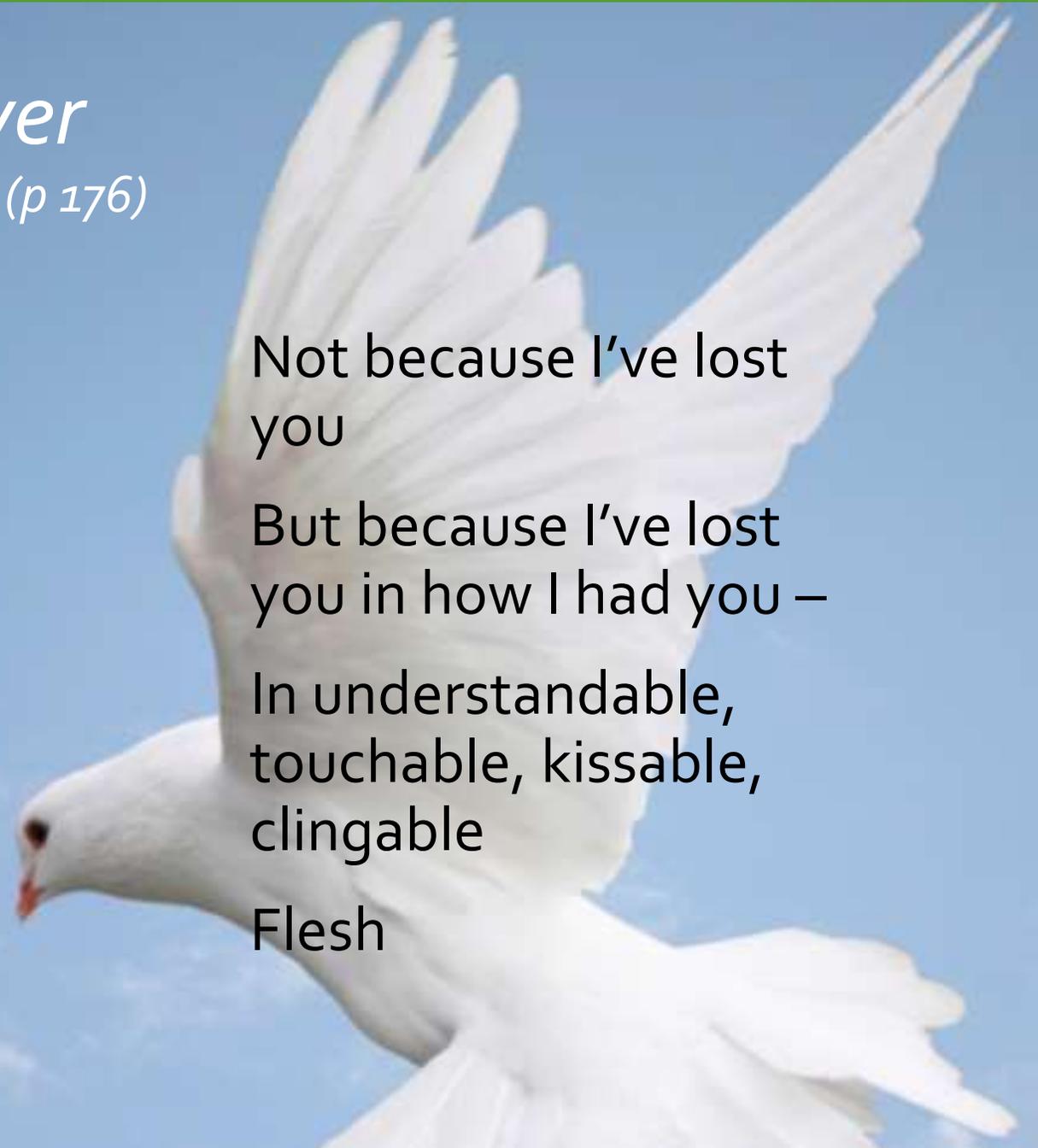
With regret

Not because I've lost  
you

But because I've lost  
you in how I had you –

In understandable,  
touchable, kissable,  
clingable

Flesh



Not as fully Lord, but as graspably human  
I want to cling, despite your protest  
Cling to your body  
Cling to your, and my, clingable humanity  
Cling to what we had, our past.

But I know that ...  
if I cling You cannot ascend, and  
I will be left clinging to your former self  
... unable to receive your present spirit



# Thanks for your attention.

- Questions
- Comments

