

Easter, 2015

**1. Mary Magdalene was, of course, acquainted with death.**

To the followers of Jesus, death had a 100% batting average; they weren't having springtime thoughts about flowers sprouting from the earth or caterpillars becoming butterflies.

We use metaphors like these in order to illustrate the wonders of new birth because our faith has taught us to see death in a very different way, some 2000 years after Jesus' Resurrection.

But not in Mary Magdalene's world; she had no basis for any such hope...

She knew that we are all terminal and that none of us lives in this world forever.

And so when she made her way to the tomb, she must have been startled first to discover that the massive stone had been rolled away, but even more startled to discover that the body of Jesus was missing--her understanding of what this meant was blocked by lack of any prior experience of someone raising himself from death.

As an aside, all 4 gospels make it clear that the empty tomb was unexpected.

Mary sees it and immediately assumes that the body was stolen.

Peter and John enter, don't know what to make of it, and return to their hiding place.

The 2 men on the road to Emmaus had heard the rumors of an empty tomb, but still they were returning home that very day in order to resume their lives, with this mystery of the empty tomb unsolved.

And then there was doubting Thomas who certainly made his feelings known when the apostles said that they had seen the risen Jesus.

*Absolutely no one seems to have heard Jesus when he spoke of rising from the dead.*

**2. However, our way to understanding the meaning of the empty tomb is also sometimes blocked--**

not by a literal stone, but by the figurative stone of our doubts; there is a little bit of the analytical scientist in all of us.

How can this resurrection be true? It challenges our sensibilities that God can break into our reality and move against our understanding of time and space--

and yet this is the crucial miracle,  
this is the miracle that validates Jesus.