



Fr. Anthony's Reflection

WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK: HOMILY FOR EASTER SUNDAY, 5TH APRIL, 2026
ACTS 10:34,37-43; PSALM 118; COLOSSIANS 3:1-4; JOHN 20:1-9

Today is Easter Sunday, the day we celebrate the most significant event that gives meaning to our Christian faith. The Resurrection is our justification that we are serving a living God; it is our evidence that Christ's sacrifice has been accepted and so we are forgiven. It is the reason why death has lost its terror because we know that death is not the end to our existence; eternal life awaits us.

Today, I want to share something with us from the Gospel. I have read this Gospel countless times but reading it again yesterday, I just could not get past the first two lines. John said "It was very early on the first day of the week and still very dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb.

My reflection today is titled "While it was still dark."

Mary of Magdala was an ardent follower of Jesus. Jesus changed her life; He gave her reasons to live again. When Jesus died, a part of her died and was buried with Him.

Today, very early, while it was still dark, she got up, in her grief not expecting a resurrection but to anoint a dead body. Take note, she was still grieving but she got up. She was not held down by fear of what might happen to her, the possible attack or ill treatment by the Roman soldiers. She was not afraid of going to stay at the tomb; after all, it was the tomb of her Lord.

Let me share with us ways that this has challenged me and the lessons I have learnt.

I. Mary Magdalene loved so much, that neither fear nor grief, darkness nor sadness could not stop her from going to the tomb of Jesus. She could brave anything for the Lord. She is an example of a love that will make us go over the cliff for the Lord, a love that will inspire us to do anything, risk anything and go to any length for the Lord. Is this how deep my love is? This is the kind of love that is worthy of the Lord. This is the love that we all should pray for.

II. I sensed in the text that the darkness John referred to was not just outside, but also reflected the state of Mary of Magdala. It was a season of darkness for her. She was still struggling with grief, horror and disbelief. The sun could have been shining brightly but it was still dark for her.

A season of darkness can happen to any of us. It is a time when it feels like our joy is in the grave, when God feels far or distant, when it is hard to believe in God's goodness and love for us.

I am sure you know what I am talking about - a time when what you believe and what you feel, see or experience do not match. It is that time when you don't feel like praying or you don't even know how to pray.

Despite it being dark, Mary got up and made her way to where she hoped to find Jesus, even if he was dead.

Darkness is not often because we do not have faith; rather it is an opportunity to show our faith, an opportunity to come to Jesus. It is not a time to keep God at a distance but to cry to God to save us so that we don't perish in darkness. God wants people who will serve Him not just when the sun is shining but also when it is dark.

III. In darkness, God is still working.

The Resurrection happened when it was dark. Nobody was there, nobody saw it. There were no eyewitnesses when Jesus rose from the grave and folded the linen clothes. It all happened in the dark. The greatest miracle happened in the dark when no one was watching. God was recreating light, just as He created light from darkness in the beginning. This was also a new beginning - light came out of darkness and darkness could not overpower it.

This is the message - in the darkness of our lives, God is still working.

We live in a world that is in darkness. We see the attacks on faith, morality and right reason, the wars and violence, natural disasters, sorrowful news of death, murder and injustice. Evil is everywhere these days.

The Good News is that even in the darkness, God is working. The first Easter didn't begin with light; it began with darkness and then light broke forth.

This is the message of Easter, that though it is still dark, God is working. Darkness will not have the final say; life will come out of the grave and light will dispel the darkness of our lives, our homes and our world. It is because of this hope that we sing Alleluia even when it is still dark.

Easter blessings to all of you.

Fr. Anthony Onoko