

**Nikki Anne Rodwell**  
reflects on Mary  
Magdalene's encounter with  
the risen Jesus

# DO NOT HOLD ME

**J**esus said, "Do not hold onto me. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."<sup>1</sup> This message was given to Mary Magdalene in her grief. She had loved and lost. Lost, it seemed, even the mortal remains of the one she had loved. At that moment, Jesus called her by name, 'Mary'. She responded, 'Rabboni'.

Jesus gave her a new mission. First, it was a mission to the disciples, who were disorientated by events, full of fear and tempted to give up. Jesus remembered them. He chose to send Mary with a message of hope, a message which sealed a new relationship with God, as Father. Then Jesus himself came with peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, to send them on a new mission.<sup>2</sup>

So, how do we in 2018 live this amazing relationship in our daily lives? Do we take time for the 'discipline of love'? In other words, do we take time to listen, to pray? By prayer, I mean a living, loving relationship. Somehow, I constantly need to turn back to Christ. I so easily go off in my own way, forgetting to listen in silence and receive the grace which is given. Yet, bidden, or not bidden, God is present.

The message above came to me during some time out of medical practice. It is now six years since my registration was restored and sadly, our NHS seems to be plunged into ever deeper crises. It is tempting to become discouraged and disillusioned, but we can call on the breath of the Spirit to renew us.

I find it helpful to go outside whenever I can as I need to be continually restored, and beauty helps. I take time to breathe deeply

and contemplate God's word. I walk forward, trusting that God knows and he understands. I use the Jesus Prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy.'

Jesus meets us where we are, usually at the most unexpected moments, as with Mary Magdalene. He comes not only when we are praying but when we are struggling with life and death. It is in the intimacy of our vulnerability that Jesus meets us and shows us the way. It is in our weakness that God's grace is free to work through us.<sup>3</sup>

So we need to be confident in who we really are and let the love of God transform us so that we become who we are created to be, both individually and as a fellowship within our profession. Let's continue to encourage one another in faith, hope and love, so that in all things we 'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God'.<sup>4</sup> We have been entrusted with an amazing privilege to serve, so let's do it cheerfully, with compassion and grace.

'Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.'<sup>5</sup>

*Nikki Anne Rodwell is a specialty doctor in palliative medicine at 'Ellenor' hospice, Gravesend*

## references

1. John 20:17
2. John 20:19-23
3. 2 Corinthians 12:9
4. Micah 6:8
5. Ephesians 3:20-21