

Saturday of the Octave of Easter “Mary Magdalene and the Disciples”
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As we approach the end of the Octave of Easter, we have an interesting Gospel reading to consider. It reminds me of one of Jesus’ parables about a king who forgives the debt of two of his servants. Which servant loves the king more? Well, the one who had the bigger debt of course. And so, Jesus appears before Mary Magdalene first whom 7 demons were cast out. Jesus appears to her first before the disciples and told her to tell his disciples that he had risen from the dead...but the disciples of course did not believe her. I wonder if Jesus appeared before Mary Magdalene first because her heart was filled with so much more gratitude than anybody else and therefore became a fitting messenger and herald of the resurrection to his disciples.

Soon after the disciples dismissed Mary’s witness of the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples and chews them out for not believing. All of this is fascinating to me because I have heard over and over about how many people really miss coming to church and really miss receiving Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, so much so that it is a wounding experience that yearns for healing. However, I think the woundedness we experience from these difficult times are also awakening a deeper hunger in all of our hearts for Jesus and for the people we have quarantined away from. What I think is going to happen when all of this is over: I believe we will have the opportunity to love the Lord more than we ever have before because these days have awakened in us how much we might have taken the Lord and even his Church for that matter for granted before all of this.

It must be said though, I think this dynamic is also true for priests in a different way. Before all of this, it is true to say that priests love their parishioners. I hope all priests do. However, now that our parishioners are no longer here with us in church for so long a period of time, this experience can really hurt after a while and it can make us priests consider whether or not we took our parishioners too much for granted in the past. Speaking for myself, when this is all over, I am going to be so much more grateful and appreciative to have parishioners. Sincerely. There is something about being wounded by the difficult times in which we live in that it allows Jesus to heal us in a way that awakens a deeper sense of gratitude for God and for the people around us. And perhaps that is a grace that will come from all of this once we finally get through it. Maybe these times are the medicine we need as disciples to gain the capacity to love God and love the people around us in a beautiful new way that no longer takes our relationships for granted. Maybe then we will be ready to go out to all the world and proclaim the Gospel.