



# Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

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## Bishop's Easter Pastoral Letter April 11, 2022

My dear Diocesan Family,

*"But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb."* (John 20:11a)

It's been a long Lent.

A Lent made longer by a two-year pandemic that continues to rage, reminding us how much of what we love has been taken away. Also, one that began with the horrific war in Ukraine in which daily images of death and destruction pour into our homes and hearts. It feels like it is a long, long Lent, not just in measured time but in weariness of life.

But Lent has again ended. And it ends with a woman in tears outside an empty tomb. It ends with a penetrating question, *"Why are you weeping?"*

Mary Magdalene's loss of her Lord and Teacher seemed like an eternal sorrow. Like so many, it appeared her grief would never end. She felt the pain of loss, abandonment, and helplessness. That's what death - of any kind - can do to us - it can leave us helpless and hopeless.

Thank God for that question, *"Why are you weeping?"*

For Mary, that question, and the One asking it, transformed her. The One asking that question was indeed the answer she struggled to find. Mary Magdalene encountered the Risen Christ, and tears and faith were raised from death to life.

I've cried more than once this Lent. I've wept hearing painful stories from survivors of Residential Schools and the continual discovery of unmarked graves of Indigenous children. I've shed tears seeing pregnant Ukrainian women carried out from bombed-out maternity hospitals. I've cried when I see many faithful people in our Diocese struggle to make difficult decisions about the future of their congregations. It's been a long and tear-filled Lent.

When have you experienced helplessness and hopelessness? What causes you to grieve for what seems like an unbearable loss? Have you felt the pain of abandonment and loneliness?

Listen to the One asking us, *"Why are you weeping?"*

Easter is always the answer to our tears. The Risen Christ transforms whatever we think has power over our lives that keeps us weary and weeping. The Tomb's emptiness means that our life is no longer filled with eternal pain, suffering, or mourning. Our Lenten tears are not just wiped away but resurrected into Easter cries of "*Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*"

My hope for all of us who struggle at times with life and faith is that we see our own weeping in Mary's tears. If we can see ourselves in Mary Magdalene, may we also see the Risen One who calls us by name and shows us a way forward, "*out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.*"

It may have been a long Lent, but Easter is eternal. May we, like Mary Magdalene, witness the glory of Easter which transforms her weeping - and ours - from defeat and doubt into tears of faith and joy!

An Easter prayer from John Birch:

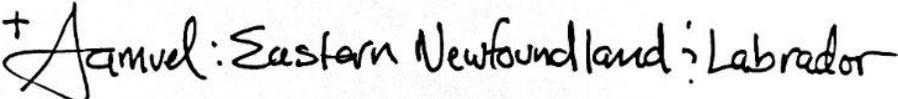
**When our faith  
stands at the grave,  
grieving  
for a stone that's rolled away,  
forgive us.**

**When our faith  
is short of  
understanding  
though the truth is there to see,  
forgive us.**

**When our faith,  
beset by doubt, sees  
no further  
than an empty tomb today,  
forgive us.**

**Bring to mind  
the cry of Mary,  
'I have seen the Lord!'  
and grant us faith to believe!  
Amen.**

In Easter joy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel V. Rose" with a cross symbol above the 'S'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Rt. Revd. Samuel V. Rose (He/Him)  
Diocesan Bishop