

John 20:1-18

²⁰Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, “Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Sermon – Easter Day, April 21, 2019 – St Andrew’s and St James, Moncton

20Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb.

It was still dark, and Mary Magdalene realized in that darkness, something had happened in the tomb. Blanketed in darkness, perhaps the greatest mystery of our faith had occurred. Somehow, and remember we don't have to have it all scientifically explained, somehow, in an unexplained way...Jesus' anima, his animation had returned to his body...somehow he was restored, somehow he got up, dropped his shroud and left that encapsulated place through the opening where the stone had been rolled away. Mary doesn't realize it yet, but it is the dawn of a new era and she is first on the scene. Things have been shaken up profoundly, but not so badly that it is all over. Things have been shaken up so that the cracks will let the light of a new order begin.

Earlier this week the world watched with shock and disbelief as Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris was engulfed by fire. Dramatically, the beautiful spire in flames, collapsed. What a loss! It seemed this icon was destroyed.

But afterwards, news began to trickle out that the fire had not completely destroyed the cathedral. The cross and altar and much of the interior survived. When I saw this photo, I was amazed to see what remained intact.





There gleaming, fully preserved, was the cross at the altar.

Behind a heap of blackened oak beams, piled up where they had fallen, daylight from vast holes in the cathedral roof lit the golden cross. The cross stands over the statue called 'Descent from the cross' by Nicolas Coustou. It too appeared untouched.



The cross remained in the cathedral and the cross remains for us. Our Christian message – out of devastation, out of the collapse of what we know, out of what we think is death, comes not the end, not death, but something completely new...new life.

A new day has dawned for the cathedral it seems. Money has poured in by the millions. Something new will be built. It will be a new expression; today's artists and artisans reaching out for the divine. People cried out that Notre Dame 'Our Lady' still has meaning for them, it still has value. On this Easter day, for the first time in 800 years there will not be a service there. But there will be services at St Sulpice nearby, within walking distance and only slightly smaller in size. Will some lapsed Roman Catholics be moved to enter the church doorways, drawn back to some, placing new value on their faith with the near destruction of such an icon?

And as Christians, our new day dawns as well. The cross remains as our symbol. The cross can mean so much. What is the cross?

The cross is 2 infinite lines, 2 infinities joining together...2 opposites joined together. The church has always depended on synthesis and integration, on things coming together. That has been part of its genius, a reason for all its unexpected resurrections and regenerations. Faith and reason, East and West, beauty and

austerity, the mystical and the philosophical, the rich and the poor, the simple and the complex, all bound up, all somehow joined together in the cross of Christ..

This line jumped out at me at our Good Friday service. ‘Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace.’ From the cross we are embraced – Jesus’ open arms...just as the father ran down the road with open arms to greet the Prodigal son he thought was lost.

Pope Francis, Good Friday 2019 put it this way: "Look at the open arms of Christ crucified, and let Him save you. Contemplate His blood shed out of love and let yourself be purified by it. In this way you can be reborn."

Rebirth is what it is all about – for us here today. We join in the ancient cycle of nature – death and rebirth – new beginnings. The trees surrounding us at the back of our house are just budding. The pale red...is starting to show...it will become leaves. The Snow has been just about washed away by relentless rain. The beautiful little crocuses are blooming – yellow, white, purple! And so are the snowdrops. But for us here, our winter is so very long. I am each year noticing it more and more. Six months of the year at least, the trees are without foliage, the ground covered with snow, animals hibernating, as if dead. All of it as if dead. Who could believe that what seems so desolate can come alive again. It is a miracle as is the revival of our Lord Jesus Christ. But revive he did. He lives and we count on his love, his benevolence to carry us, to support us through this wonderful but wild life. Thanks be to God that

He is risen

Alleluia.

What is the cross –

2 infinite lines, 2 infinities joining together...2 opposites joined together

Struck me on good Friday that the cross is an embrace – Jesus open arms...just as the father ran down the road with open arms to greet the son he thought was lost,

The church has always depended on synthesis and integration. That has been part of its genius, a reason for all its unexpected resurrections and regenerations. Faith and reason, Athens and Jerusalem, the aesthetic and the ascetic, the mystical and the philosophical — even the crucifix itself, two infinite lines converging and combining.

Something had happened. It is start of a new era.

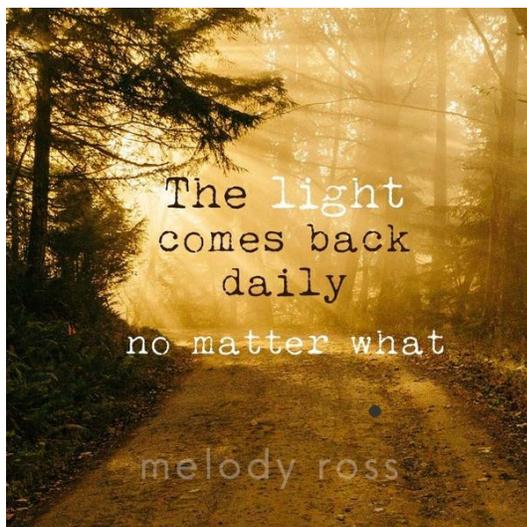
"Today is the celebration of our hope, the celebration of this truth: nothing and no one will ever be able to separate us from God's love."

Pope Francis



By [Ross Douthat](#)

Opinion Columnist



Behind a heap of blackened oak beams that lay piled up where they had fallen, daylight from vast holes in the cathedral roof lit a golden cross over the Pietà statue by Nicolas Coustou, which appeared untouched.

Is that the kernel of Christ? synthesis? 2 opposite lines converging and combining?



Descent from the cross.