

An Easter story

Phyllis Zagano | Mar. 28, 2012 Just Catholic

If it were not for Mary Magdalene, we never would have heard about the Resurrection. The men would still be in the Upper Room, trying to figure how to get out of town.

Do you sometimes wonder if things have changed?

I don't think they have.

Men are careful. Men are circumspect. Men, after all, have their careers to consider.

Women just do it.

That could be a reason Jesus did not name women as Apostles, or at least why the women who were there did not bother with the title. The women were not interested in advancement or having their names remembered. They were simply doing.

What did the men want? Power? Authority? They preached the message, it is true, but they also jockeyed with each other for position. And who could forget the one who sold out for cash?

So, have things changed? As the church universal begins to move through the holy days this season, few will argue with the statement that the men have made a mess of things.

Of course, the Big Events go forward. [The pope goes to Mexico](#) [1]. [The pope goes to Cuba](#) [2]. The symbolism is striking, even as the palace guard drags the nearly 85-year-old professor around the world. On the one hand, it seems insane. On the other, it is important, it really is.

But it is also very, very important for Christians -- a third of the world -- to keep an eye on the empty tomb. Christ is risen, that tomb proclaims. Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again. That is what really makes a difference.

Without the concept -- if not the fact -- of resurrection burned into every human heart and mind, the names Trayvon Martin and, lest we choose sides, George Zimmerman soon will be forgotten and tossed upon the trash heap of history. Their names, their story and their stories, are emblematic of so much of human interaction.

What happened in Florida happens every single day in so many ways in so many lives. We never really know who started things. We only know both sides are changed forever. The small war in Sanford, Fla., which took the life of one young man and ruined the life of another, is but a microcosm of what happens every day in the neighborhood, in the office, in politics, and yes, in shooting wars where young men kill younger men for reasons perhaps now forgotten. In Florida, one was 16; the other was 28. Was it for power? Was it for authority?

The women, meanwhile, just keep on keeping on. They fold the sorrows and the hurts into their hearts and carry on. Did you say the one was 16? And the other one was 28? The women just shake their heads.

The women live the lives and do the work that keeps the world spinning. They are the teachers and the shopkeepers; the doctors and the homemakers. The women are the managers and the bus drivers and the librarians. They are the backbone of the parish, of the community, of the family. Some -- maybe more than some -- are infected with a greed for power and authority. But more than some have both power and authority and wear them lightly, wield them gracefully.

We do not know the end of the story in Florida. We do not know what the judge and the crowds gathered around will call for. We do not know if one young man or the other will be called "criminal," both punished and remembered for what happened there in Florida that mild evening.

The fact is, there is war all over. Florida and Afghanistan are terribly alike these days, as Easter flowers wake from winter slumber and brighter skies greet every day. I fear the men will keep wars going, no matter where, positioning, plotting, politicking. I fear they will remain locked in the upper rooms of their own minds, denying and delaying any stop to the argument. They will keep it going, even though no one knows (or can remember) how it got started. It is important to save face.

Meanwhile, Important Things and Big Events will come and go. Power and authority will rise and they will fall. People will be hurt, terribly, and some will die.

The women, meanwhile, will keep announcing the Resurrection.

[Phyllis Zagano is senior research associate-in-residence at Hofstra University and author of several books in Catholic studies. Her most recent books are *Women & Catholicism* (Palgrave-Macmillan), *Women in Ministry: Emerging Questions about the Diaconate* (Paulist Press) and *Women Deacons: Past, Present, Future* (with Gary Macy and William T. Ditewig), (Paulist Press).]

Editor's note: We can send you an email alert every time Phyllis Zagano's column, "Just Catholic," is posted to NCRonline.org. Go to this page and follow directions: [Email alert sign-up](#) [3]. If you already receive email alerts from us, click on the "update my profile" button to add "Phyllis Zagano" to your list.

Source URL (retrieved on 07/20/2017 - 20:12): <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/just-catholic/easter-story>

Links:

[1] <http://ncronline.org/node/29490>

[2] <http://ncronline.org/node/29540>

[3] <http://ncronline.org/email-alert-signup>