

PREPARING AT HOME

April 15-21, 2019

Focus reading: John 20:1–18 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=418986429>)

Other lectionary readings: Acts 10:34–43; Psalm 118:1–2, 14–24; 1 Corinthians 15:19–26

Theme: Easter Day

Recent news has been filled with too many examples of ways in which religious leaders have caused suffering and engaged in deception, abuse of power, and secret-keeping. To say that people have been let down by the church is an understatement. Likewise, Mary's grief at Jesus' death was compounded by the fact that religious leaders had been complicit in helping the Roman authorities to execute Jesus. It is no wonder that when Mary finds Jesus' tomb empty, she assumes that someone has taken his body to a place where his followers would not be able to find him. She shares her assumption of deceit and treachery with the male disciples who return to their homes after investigating for themselves. But Mary remains at the tomb, where she has an encounter that has forever changed history. Consumed by grief, Mary at first does not recognize the voice that is speaking to her as belonging to Jesus. How could it be? The voice that political and religious leaders tried so desperately to silence calls Mary's name. There are no trumpets or choirs singing loud "Alleluias," only his voice calling her name. The assurance of resurrection comes through tears of unimaginable grief, anger, and bewilderment. Mary has seen the Lord through her tears, and she hasn't stopped telling the story ever since!

NOTE TO PARENTS: We pass through many emotions on this week leading up to Easter. Participating in the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service and/or the early Easter morning service and breakfast will help your child to move through those emotions. Even as we remember the sad moments – like Jesus' death on the cross – we know that joy is ahead in the new life of Easter.

SURPRISE!

Have you ever surprised someone? How? What is the biggest surprise that ever happened to you? How did it make you feel? Imagine some good surprises. How do you think Mary felt on that first Easter morning? Pretend that you are Mary talking to the disciples after seeing Jesus. What do you say? How do you say it?

WHO NEEDS TO BE SURPRISED?

Do you know someone who needs a wonderful surprise? Make an Easter card or a simple craft (spring flowers) and give it to that person. Tell them that Easter is about wonderful surprises, and you want to share a surprise with them!

PRAYER

Loving God,
This Holy Week may we remember with gratitude
how much Jesus loves us.
May we remember the surprising, unstoppable power you have!
Help us to share your surprising love with others.
Amen.

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