

We've seen throughout John the careful theological construction of his story-telling. He begins with the majestic prologue of the first chapter which retells and reframes the story of creation (Genesis 1-2) as the beginning of the gospel good news. Here, at the very end of the gospel of John, we return to the garden where Mary (and we by extension as the readers) experience the living resurrected Christ, it's a re-entry into the Garden of Eden, a re-creation, all things becoming new. John seems to insist less upon the miraculous sign of the resurrection and rather on its meaning. Jesus has restored, renewed, resurrected his relationship with those who follow his example, walking in his footsteps as disciple-friends. Mary's testimony is not "I have seen Jesus again." Rather she proclaims "I have seen the Lord." Yet she - like the other two disciples: Peter and John - in this story see progressively. They see without seeing, until their eyes are opened through experience, interpretation and a living word. They encounter the resurrected Jesus like Nicodemus slowly comes to see clearly through the gospel from John 3 until now, like the blind man in John 9 who knows Jesus healed him but doesn't know who Jesus is, or recognizes him until further encounters. It's the working out of his proclamation in John 9:39: "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind."

It's not just the end of the gospel it's the teleos of it. John 13 (the beginning of the Last Supper) has the narrator saying that Jesus "that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." John 13:1. Curiously the word for "end" in Greek is teleos which means not just the chronological end, but the objective end, the goal of an action. His cross is the end (in both senses) of his life journey.

**EARLY ...WHILE IT WAS STILL DARK::** it's the end of the sabbath, and so this is the first moment, since sun-down on Friday night that the women can either come to the tomb to finish anointing and preparing the body, or come and lament as was customary in their culture and time.

**saw the linen wrappings lying there::** The text portrays John as interpreting the way in which the wrappings and bandages are laying on the ground bandages as particular. They're not just discarded and left about as if they were removed by grave robbers, but rather have fallen as if removed by the body (Jesus) himself.

**for as yet they did not understand the scripture::** throughout the Gospel of John, the telling of the seven signs he relates, an interpretive word [scripture?] is always needed for the disciples to understand - to see - what they have witnessed. It's as if one cannot see on one's own, without an exterior word.

**she bent over to look into the tomb::** the entry to the tomb would have been low to the ground. One would have to crawl into the cave tomb.

SCRIPTURES FOR  
EASTER SUNDAY 4.1.2018

John 20:1-18  
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

**<sup>1</sup>EARLY** 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. <sup>2</sup> So 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." <sup>3</sup> Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup> The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then **the disciples returned to their homes.**

<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw **two angels in white**, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the

**two angels in white::** throughout the testimonies of the Bible angels – or messengers from God – are repeatedly portrayed and described in this way: “I looked up and saw a man clothed in linen...” Daniel 10:5 “Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed...” 2 Macabees 3:26 “And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.” Mark 9:2-3 “While [Jesus] was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.” Acts 1:10

**Woman::** Remember that Jesus used this same formulation of speech at the wedding of Cana with his mother in John 2: “<sup>3</sup> When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus said to her, “**Woman**, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.” John 2:3-4 Jesus spoke thus at the beginning, at the first miraculous sign of the gospel [water into wine] and come full circle to use it again here at the eighth and final miraculous sign [his own resurrection].

**Whom are you looking for?::** She is not looking for a sign, proof, but a person. The words of Jesus reveal the enjeux in the text. It’s not about rational proof or a material demonstration but about a person – a relationship.

Jesus said to her, “**Mary!**” :: It’s the speaking and hearing of her name that opens her eyes so that Mary can see who is right in front of her. It echoes back to the teaching of the Good Shepherd in John 10, where Jesus insisted that “the sheep hear [the Good Shepherd’s] voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” John 10:3-5 Here the metaphorical teaching takes on flesh and happens in reality.

head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They 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.” <sup>14</sup> When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus 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.” <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “**Mary!**” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “**Rabbouni!**” (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus 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.’” <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

### Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

- **What shimmers for you in this story?**
- **Imagine yourself in this scene. Are you like John- rushing into the tomb to see for yourself?; like Peter, hanging outside bewildered?; like Mary, searching but not finding, continuing to look?**
- **Ressurrection is a new creation. It’s the reknitting of the world in a way that sin (everything that divorces us from God’s presence) is overthrown and defeated. It’s the divine presence all around us wether we see it or not, whether we hear our name called or not. How do you long for your eyes to be opened this Easter-time to see more clearly the presence of God in your life?; your relationships?; your work or rest?; our city?; our nation?; our world?**