

## 2016 3 27 C Easter readings

### Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

<sup>1</sup>O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever! <sup>2</sup>Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

<sup>14</sup>The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. <sup>15</sup>There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; <sup>16</sup>the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly." <sup>17</sup>I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord. <sup>18</sup>The Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death. <sup>19</sup>Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. <sup>20</sup>This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it. <sup>21</sup>I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. <sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. <sup>23</sup>This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. <sup>24</sup>This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

### John 20:1-18

<sup>20</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 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.

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This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Easter is without question my favorite day on the Christian calendar. And that isn't because of Easter Egg hunts, jelly beans and baked ham dinners- though those do all contribute somewhat to my feelings.

It IS because we are jolted into seeing the Resurrection again for the first time. Did you hear that? We catch a glimpse of Jesus again for the first time, because in the day to day of living our lives, we neglect to think about it most times. We neglect to think about how Jesus dying to self correlates exactly to our dying to self, putting our trust, our faith entirely in him. Easter reminds us to do this AGAIN each and every year, and we do need the reminders. It's wonderful to be reminded of the gift we've received by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection is a total reality for the simple reason that Jesus has been raised. We are told this in each gospel. And even today, we continue to learn lessons from Jesus, to hold him in our hearts; we strive to live lives that are caring where we seek justice for all of God's children. We learned this from Jesus.

Our assigned Lectionary reading for today came from the gospel of John. John's gospel tells us that Mary Magdalene reaches the tomb first but seeing that the stone has been removed, she is frightened she turns right around and Peter and Simon Peter step into the tomb to find it empty. She bumps into a man who she thinks is the gardener but when

he identifies Mary she realizes that this is Jesus. He tells her to go and tell the others about him and so she does this.

It so interests me the differing perspectives in the four gospels when it comes to telling the story of Jesus' resurrection.

In Matthew's gospel beginning in chapter 28 we're told that "at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.<sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.'<sup>8</sup> So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. The women came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Mark identifies the women in Mark's Gospel as Mary Magdalene, Mary Mother of Jesus and Salome and they worry about who will roll the stone away at the tomb. When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, <sup>6</sup> but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for

Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>[b]</sup> who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. <sup>7</sup> Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died.”

<sup>8</sup> The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.

Luke has the women including Mary Magdalene approach the tomb first off. They have spices to prepare Jesus' body but the stone has already been rolled away. They see that Jesus is not there. Two men in clothes gleaming like lightening appear. They remind the women that Jesus had told them that Jesus must be handed over to sinners, crucified and on the third day rise again. The women, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary mother of James, run back to the disciples to share their story. Peter wants to see this for himself so he runs to take a look.

In each of the gospels Jesus' disciples have run to his tomb to catch a glimpse of him one last time. In each story, the women are the first to see that Jesus is gone or in the case of John's gospel the woman, Mary Magdalene is the only one who catches a glimpse of the risen Christ on that day. This is important as we consider how women were ultimately removed from much of the New Testament later on by the Patriarchs of the church. Jesus was fine with being surrounded by women. He treated everyone as equal. In Luke, Mary Magdalene and a few other women are the only ones who catch a glimpse of Jesus on the Easter morning. One of the great rewards we can experience in our lives today is to catch a glimpse of Jesus the Christ.

I have caught glimpses of Jesus many times and I'm sure you have too. You might have even BEEN a glimpse of Jesus to someone else! I saw Jesus in Oberlin, Ohio while helping at the food pantry at Oberlin Community Services. I stocked shelves as volunteers escorted people in need of groceries up and down the aisles as they selected produce, baked goods and canned goods. There at OCS I caught a glimpse of Jesus not only in those giving out the food but also in those who receive the food.

I've seen Jesus in doctors in this country and doctors and medical personnel around the world who donate their time in free clinics and expect nothing in return. It wasn't long ago that a doctor, Rick Sacra and several others returned from Liberia after treating Ebola patients. We know Ebola as a scary and dreadful disease. The doctor and nurses came back to the US to be treated because they, in their willingness to help others had contracted the disease. It is estimated that 11,350 people died from that outbreak. 22,000 children have lost their parents because of the disease. Ebola remains a problem as new cases continue to break out, though the news hasn't had much to say about it. And the international front was slow to respond to the crises as it was occurring. Just this month, Dr. Rick Sacra has returned to Liberia to continue the fight to beat Ebola. I see Jesus in him. There are doctors all around the world who receive very little in compensation in order to see that others have a better life.

As you celebrate this Easter try to catch glimpses of Jesus yourself. You can even verbalize your observation to those you see 'being Jesus'. "We talked at church on Easter about how if we look around us, we will catch glimpses of Jesus. You remind me of Jesus

because of the way you are so willing to help your 90 year old neighbor.” You can even turn these moments into church invitations because you never know when the person you’re talking to could use an opportunity to catch a glimpse of Jesus. I’ve read in a church vitality book that we’re each supposed to invite at least one person to church each week, so you might share how you’ve caught glimpses of Jesus here. Because I don’t know about you but when I look around this sanctuary, I see Jesus a lot in each and everyone of you. YOU are a gift.

HAPPY EASTER. Amen.