

# Easter Sunday, April 4

John 20:1–18 [NIV biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)

## The Empty Tomb

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

## Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

## Awesome Mystery

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

### Discussion

We come to the conclusion of Holy student friend of mine, Paul, told of his childhood Greek Orthodox Easter celebration, when his priest strode down the aisle roaring "Christ is risen!" The congregation roared back, "He is risen indeed!" When the priest got to the entry doors, he burst them open and shouted to the whole world, "Christ is risen!" The congregation again shouted back, "He is risen indeed!"

That is what we need to remember and proclaim with boldness and joy. We serve a risen Lord who has vanquished death. And, because he lives, we, too, shall live in the joy of Easter.

As I write this with winter and COVID-19 closing in, the future looks murky and conflicted. But one thing I know: Easter always comes on time, in time. Battered though we may be, our Easter faith will revive and renew us once again. "Christ is risen!"

### Today's Prayer

*Christ is risen from the grave's dark prison. So let our joy rise full and free. Breathe, O breathe, your quickening Spirit into the darkness of our lives, and lift our spirits with the hope that only you can offer. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

**Note:** Continue readings all year long with *God Pause* by Luther Seminary.

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**Image:** Submitted by Kerry Griffin, "Main sanctuary, 2007 Easter."

Awesome Mystery

