

Touching points

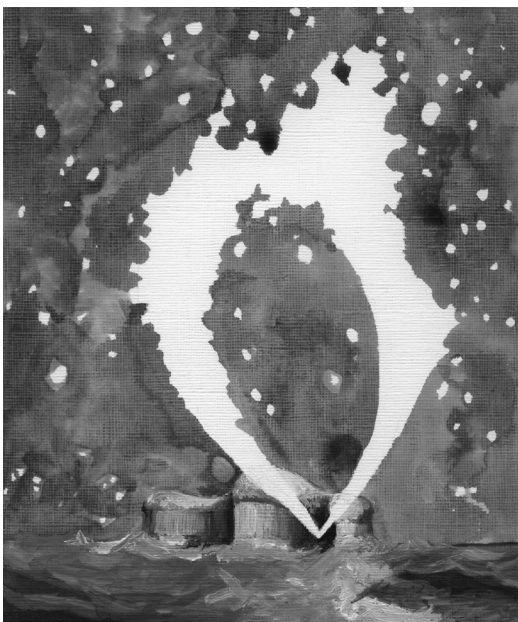
John 20.1-18

Jesus died on Friday; it is now Sunday morning. In their grief, three friends visit Jesus' tomb and find him gone. Two leave, believing the body has been taken, but Mary remains, perhaps looking for something to hold onto in this difficult time, and Jesus is revealed to her. She runs to tell the other disciples that Jesus is alive.

Now read John 20.1-18 see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

And suddenly, the story seems to be over. Jesus, who promised so much, is gone. The dream is over. Jesus' closest friends are shattered. This wasn't the plan. Illegally tried, brutally hung up to die and then shoved in a borrowed grave before the start of the Sabbath. The friends wait. What is there left to do? And then Sunday, time to properly treat the body which was so hastily buried two days before – and then what? Go back to what life was like before? Except that Mary doesn't find him in the tomb, as expected, instead she meets him – alive – in the garden.



How would you describe the mystery of Easter?

LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

Go into your garden, if you have one, or a local park. Find something that is newly growing – perhaps bulbs or blossom or other flowering plants. Have a really good look at how this thing grows: Does it push up, unfurl, spring out? As you quietly observe, ask God to speak to you about what Jesus' resurrection life looks like in your life, in this season. Perhaps you'd like to draw the life you're looking at and write down anything you sense God is saying to you. As a final act with your garden tray or page (that you've been progressing throughout Lent), add a representation of this thing to it. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the record you have made of your Lenten journey this year.

GIVE

Make some simple Easter cards.

You will need: A5 pieces of card folded in half, patterned paper, scissors, glue, chocolate Easter treats.

Take some patterned paper – or print out a patterned background from the internet – and cut out egg shapes from it, just a bit smaller than your card. Stick the egg shapes onto the cards. Buy some chocolate Easter treats and package them up with each card. Leave the cards and treats on your neighbours' doorsteps (out of the reach of pets). Pray that they would know the life Jesus brings this Easter.

WATCH

Take some time to watch a film about Jesus this week. If you're an adult, there are lots of options available including, *The Passion of the Christ*, *Mary Magdalene* and *Jesus of Nazareth*. If you have children in your household, you might enjoy *The Miracle Maker*. Very small children might do better with some shorter excerpts from Jesus' life – try these two short animations from Crossroads Kids Club:



Last supper:
crossroadskidsclub.net/last-supper/



or Easter:
crossroadskidsclub.net/gods-story-easter/



BAKE



Bake a traditional Simnel cake – this is fruit cake, topped with marzipan and decorated with marzipan balls, representing Jesus and his disciples. Try this recipe: www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easter-simnel-cake

Bear in mind that one of the key ingredients of this cake is marzipan which is not suitable for those with nut allergies! An alternative might be a chocolate sponge topped with small chocolate eggs.



Find the most uplifting worship song you can, turn the volume up to 11 and dance like no one is watching!

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

By the time she reached Peter and John, Mary was out of breath and very upset. She'd been running. 'They've taken Jesus,' she announced. 'I went to the tomb, but the stone's been moved from the entrance and the Lord's gone.' Distressed, Peter and John went running to the tomb. John got there first and saw the cloth that Jesus' body had been wrapped in, abandoned inside.



Peter rushed past John into the tomb. He saw the wrappings, but noticed that the cloth that had been on

Jesus' head was rolled up and placed on its own. John came in and saw it too. Neither of them understood the Scripture saying that Jesus must rise from the dead. Having seen the empty tomb, they went home. Mary, who had followed after them, was too sad to go home. She stayed there, crying.

Through her tears, Mary could see into the tomb. She was shocked. There were angels in there now, sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet. The angels spoke: 'Why are you crying?' 'They've taken away my Lord,' said Mary. 'I don't know where they've put him.' Mary glanced away from the tomb and saw another man standing there. 'Why are you crying?' the man asked her. 'Who are you looking for?' Thinking he was a gardener, Mary said, 'If you've taken him away, please tell me where he is.' The man replied with a single word: 'Mary!' As soon as he'd spoken it, Mary saw that the man was Jesus.

'Don't hold onto me, Mary,' Jesus said. 'Go and tell my brothers that I'm going up to my Father, to my God and your God.' And so Mary went running off again – this time to tell the disciples that she'd seen the Lord. **John 20.1-18**

Did you know?

- Mary, Peter and John were all friends of Jesus.
- Grave robberies happened at the time, so Peter and John may have thought someone had taken Jesus' body away.

John 20.1-18 (NRSV)

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. 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.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 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. 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.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' 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.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). 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."' 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.