

April 5, 2026  
Easter Day, Year C  
Trinity, St. Louis  
The Rev. Paul Jacobson, *Rector*

*Acts 10:34-43*

*Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24*

*I Corinthians 15:19-26*

*John 20:1-18*

**Alleluia! Christ is risen!**  
Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Every Easter, we proclaim Jesus' resurrection with joyful certainty: *Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

But you and I live in a world filled with chaos and strife, so it's not surprising that we prefer certainty. We want clear answers, from the Church, from the Bible, from God.

But John's account of the Resurrection contains more questions than answers: "Why are you weeping?" "Whom are you looking for?" "Where have you laid him?" What do we make out of all these questions? And what do we make of the person in the middle of them: Mary Magdalene?

According to John, Mary is alone when she comes to Jesus' tomb. Since we know the other gospel accounts, there are more questions. Why is she there? To mourn? To anoint his body? Why is she alone? Where are the other women?

What seems certain is that she did not expect to find what she found...the stone rolled away. And, in the first of her reporting trips in this Gospel, she runs to tell the others what she has seen.

When they hear the news, Peter and John, trying to outman each other by getting there first, run to the tomb. They each enter the tomb and see only the cloths that had been used to wrap Jesus' body for burial. Then...well, then they go home.

But what of Mary? She stays at the tomb – weeping. Can you feel her anguish? I imagine her trying to steel herself to look into the tomb. When she does, she sees angels who ask her, "why are you weeping?" (Apparently, the angels were not there for Peter and John.) In her distress, Mary answers "they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Dejected, she turns to leave, her eyes swollen and flooded with tears. Then she hears someone else ask, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?"

Thinking it must be the cemetery attendant, she said, “if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”

And then she hears his voice; the voice she did not know before; the voice she did not recognize until it speaks her name. “Mary.” Then, through her grief, she recognizes that this is Jesus, who knows her fully and sees her completely.

What happened to Mary in the garden is not some far-off event. It also happens to us. We’ve heard the message of the gospel, we participate in the life of the church, we have an inkling of the promises that are ours through our relationship with Jesus, yet we often lose our bearings and begin to despair. Disappointments, betrayals, and tragedies blind us, and we can’t see clearly the joy that is always there for us.

There are times in our lives when we cannot see through our tears, and we stumble from place to place. We miss the wonder of visits from angels (or angelic people) who ask us why we are crying. We sob and wonder what in the world happened. And why did it happen to me?

We meet our Lord, but often can’t hear his voice. We may hear his words, but do not comprehend their meaning. We miss the possibility that it just might be true that the One whom we are seeking, the One we long for, is the One standing right in front of us, saying our name.

So, how do we move from stumbling around in our tears to striding into the world proclaiming that the grave is never, ever, ever the end? How do we get to that place? It is the same way we get to Carnegie Hall – practice, practice, practice.

In her 2003 book *Practicing Resurrection*, which she wrote after the death of her brother, Nora Gallagher wonders whether we spend too much time in the church discussing whether we believe in the resurrection or not. When we do this, she thinks, we may miss the point.

She writes:

“It was not just what they saw when they saw Jesus, or how they saw it, but what was set free in them.

What if [life after death] is not ... exclusively for the dead? What if it's a life available to us all, something the living can participate in, too?

What if the resurrection is not about the appearances of Jesus alone, but also about what those appearances point to, what they *ask*? It’s finally what we do with them that matters; make them into superstitions or use them as stepping stones to new life. We have to practice resurrection.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/book-reviews/excerpts/view/13934/practicing-resurrection>

We have to practice resurrection. But, how do we use whatever resurrection experiences we have as stepping stones to new life? You can ask anyone who has found new life in a 12-Step program, and they will tell you that you have to tell someone else what happened to you. We all have stories of life emerging from death, whether it's a big thing, like someone getting clean and sober, or a small thing, like a tulip pushing its way up out of the soil, insisting on blooming even when there might be another frost.

Today, we will, as a community of faith, practice resurrection by baptizing Dominic Gregory Maiocco as the newest member of the Risen Body of Christ. We will renew our Baptismal Covenant; we will hear of how water has marked our life in God; we will mark Dominic, by name, as Christ's own forever. And as we do, we remember the names of others marked as Christ's own forever, whether recently, like Gaëlle, or those who have gone on to see the Risen Christ face to face, like Barbi and Lou.

There are resurrection stories all around us that cry out to be told. And the more you practice telling them, the more stories you will see. Even in our broken and war-torn world, stepping stones to new life are all around us.

After she sees Jesus, my guess is that Mary Magdelene had many more questions. But Jesus tells her, "Don't hang on to me," but go and tell the others. As a woman, Mary didn't have much status in the ancient world; she certainly didn't hold a degree in theology. But she knew what she had experienced in the garden, and without her telling the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," you and I would not be here today.

As we step into this Easter season, my prayer for you is that you might discover deep joy in practicing resurrection ... and then tell someone the story of what God is doing in our world right now. As the Psalmist says, *This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!*

**Alleluia! Christ is risen!** Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A blessed Easter to you all. Amen.