

### Wait Until You See

When I was little, I loved spending time at my grandparents' house in Niantic. One of my favorite memories is of lying in bed with the windows open at night, listening to the chirping and buzzing of cicadas. Once in a while, during the day one would start up, confused about what time it was. I never actually saw one. But sometimes, I would find a cicada shell – a roundish, empty bug body with a neat slit up its back. Usually it would be next to a tree where the cicada emerged to live its noisy, night life. That empty shell was the only evidence that a miracle had occurred – an insect broke out to live in a different form. Where it was going, it didn't need its old clothes any more.

An empty shell – a pile of old clothes. That's all that was left in the tomb. Mary, with her mind on sitting vigil after the Sabbath, didn't even witness that much. Seeing the stone rolled away, she jumped to the conclusion that Jesus' body had been stolen. How often do we jump to our own conclusions – especially about the presence of God in our lives?

Mary runs off to sound the alarm. The two disciples she alerts dash off to see for themselves. What they find *almost* corroborates her story – the linen cloths were there, for sure, but neatly folded. That couldn't be the work of grave robbers. Why would they have folded something they didn't care about?

Here John tells us that everyone involved is confused. No one understood the meaning of the scripture yet. We know that the beloved disciple believed...believed what? Or in what? Could it be that he believed what Mary said? He had to wait until he got to the tomb to see with his own eyes. But that's all he and Peter see, an empty tomb with cast off cloth. They jump to their own conclusion and go back home, aware only of absence and emptiness.

By this point, Mary is back outside the tomb. She's prepared herself for the long, sad wait. Through her tears, she looks once again into the tomb, as if to convince herself it is truly empty. She sees two angels. Funny how this does not seem to faze her – maybe nothing short of a miracle would do that!

They ask why she is weeping, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Mary realizes there is someone else there, outside the tomb with her. "Whom are you looking for?" Thinking it is the gardener she implores him to tell her where he has taken the body.

"Mary." She doesn't recognize Jesus by sight. But when he speaks, she knows him immediately. Then she sees Jesus, her Lord. Nothing short of a miracle...

Our sunrise service this morning took place in a garden – of sorts. We find ourselves with Mary in the garden this morning. And the one mistaken for a gardener, is sowing the seeds of new life among us.

Can you remember Jesus first words in the opening of John’s gospel? Jesus says to the disciples of John the Baptist: “What are you looking for?” Now, in today in this new beginning, this new creation, Jesus asks Mary the question: “Whom are you looking for?” On this Easter morning could Jesus be asking us that same question?

What *are* we looking for? It’s helpful to remember that it wasn’t until Jesus called out her name that Mary truly could see Jesus, her Rabbouni. Could Jesus be calling out our name?

Jesus also says at the start of his ministry: “Come and see.”

What are we looking for? Have we jumped to our own conclusions about what it is that we need? Or what we need to know? Or what we need to do?

We have come to the empty tomb with our expectations and maybe even preconceived notions about what we will find. The funny thing about resurrection is that, as confusing as it may be, it brings new life in the least-expected ways. Just when we think our prayers are useless; all our hard work for change has come to naught; all our patience and hope and trust are in vain, the Word made flesh begins to live IN us.

We need to stand in this garden with Mary. We need to listen, to watch, to wait until we see – each in our own special way – Jesus, the Lord, who calls to us.

Having stood in the garden with Mary, we can help spread the news that the darkness has not overcome the Word made flesh who lived among us. Perhaps this day, or one day soon, if we will just wait until we see, we, too, may say, “I have seen the Lord.”

Thanks be to God!