**John 20:1-16 Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” 3Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there,* 7and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. 11But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. 12And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” 14Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there,* and did not know that it was Jesus. 15Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” 16Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).**

It’s important that we read the Easter story, not only on Easter morning, but very often in our walk. Just like the Christmas story, it’s foundational to our faith. The Virgin birth and the Resurrection of Jesus are much like the two angels we encounter in this scripture. They sit at the head and feet of the faith and must instruct and inform our walk with Christ.

Here we have the story of what we call Easter morning! Mary goes to the tomb, finds it empty, runs and gets Peter and John. Peter and John run to the tomb, find it empty, and go home. In Matthew 16:21, we know that Jesus tells His disciples of His coming resurrection. In Mathew 17:23, He tells them again. In Matthew 20:19, He tells them again. Yet, in John 20:8, we see that John went into the tomb, saw, and believed. The very men who were with Jesus at the transfiguration, with Him in the Upper Room, with Him in the Garden – walked with Him, talked with Him, heard the words from His lips still struggled to understand.

In John 20:29, we read - *Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* That’s us. Jesus was patient and loving to those who walked with Him. They struggled. Jesus knows we’ll struggle. They stumbled. Jesus knows we’ll stumble. Jesus knows that it’s not seeing that leads to faith. It’s faith that leads to seeing. There’s a famous saying – I’ll believe it when I see it. Jesus says – you’ll see it only when you believe.

Often though, we focus so hard on Peter and John that we forget Mary Magdalene in all this. Peter and John went into the tomb, looked around, and left. Mary looks in and sees two angels. She is weeping, not a soft quiet weeping, but the Greek word means sobbing. This is the same word used in Matthew 26:75 where it says that Peter wept bitterly for his denying Jesus. This is a gut-wrenching sob. Likely, Mary’s eyes are clouded with tears, her breath is hitching. She is in emotional turmoil. The angels ask why are you weeping? Verse 14 says she turned and saw Jesus, He asks the same question. She thought Him the gardener. Her emotions were running away with her. Her fear was having a field day. We can almost see the raging storm inside of her at this moment. She’s not thinking about the Victory that has taken place, but the Body she believes misplaced. She begs for His body to be returned. Jesus speaks her name and she realizes she is looking upon the risen Christ. Jesus speaks her name, the storms calm, she sees.

How often it is that only during our times of gut-wrenching sadness and suffering that we are able to see Christ for Who He is. How often we aren’t the ones that call to Him in the storm, but it is He who calls our name in the storm. We, like Mary, must choose to answer – Master, Lord, Teacher, Savior. It’s in this utterance of belief that we find our hope of relief. Faith is believing until we see.

On this Easter morning, remember that these were human beings, wracked with emotions, tortured by fear, riddled with flaws, dealing with the death of their friend. They weren’t superheroes or make believe characters. Over 2000 years ago, real people witnessed a really extraordinary event and chose to believe. Their choice to believe changed the world!

We too can change the world. We may never preach to 3000, but we might plant the seed with 1. We may never speak the Gospel in foreign lands, but we can surely speak it in our home. We will never calm the raging seas, but we can be the voice that offers peace to those experiencing storms.

This week have a Joyous Easter the whole week through! Celebrate the Resurrection -look forward with expectation to the time when Christ will come again! The Jesus we seek is not in the tomb… He is Risen. Let our praises rise today to the High Priest, now seated in Glory at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.