

# RENEW LENT - EASTER SUNDAY

## MARCH 31, 2024

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*"I Have Seen the Lord!" Alleluia!*

By Jane Korvemaker

John 20:1-18

This Gospel reading from John ends with the most profound statement anyone could ever make:  
*"I have seen the Lord!"*

I am struck by the fact that in its literal context, Mary of Magdala is speaking to the disciples, yet analogously Mary is speaking to me. I can almost hear the breathless excitement with which the words are confidently shared to me, *I have seen the Lord!*

Mary, along with several others, watched Jesus die. There was no doubt of this; his divinity was so emptied out ([Phil 2:6-11](#)) it was not perceivable to the human eye, there was no anticipated resurrection. As mighty as Jesus was with God's favour, dying on a cross was not only considered a curse ([Deut 21:22-23](#)), but it also appeared to signal defeat under Roman rule, which had not been overturned by his death.

In her love for the Teacher, we find Mary drawn to the tomb. The second time we find her there, there is something curious that happens:

*"When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus" (Jn 20:14).*

They interact and then Jesus says, *"Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!'" (v. 16).*

This double turning, if literal, would mean she has placed her back to Jesus again. Clearly that can't be the case; she's just recognized her Teacher! Rather, it's meant to catch our eye and question ourselves: do we understand what John is conveying to us?

Initially, her turn is a physical one and she encounters a figure she does not recognize—an ordinary man, devoid of any apparent glory or heavenly heralds. In this we learn: It's not enough to see Jesus to recognize him. Jesus then initiates the movement – he calls her by name. Mary. How many times had she heard him call her before? Just as we discern the voices of those dear to us through intimate moments together, so too does Mary recognize Jesus' voice.

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*"The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ...and the sheep follow him because they know his voice." ([Jn 10:3, 4b](#)).*

*"Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!'" ([Jn 20:16](#)).*

Her second turn is in spirit and faith toward her Shepherd. But not just the human Shepherd whom she loved: she recognizes his divinity. The proof for this is her proclamation to the disciples. It is not, 'I have seen the Teacher,' nor, 'I have seen the Messiah,' but: *"I have seen the Lord!"* (v. 18)

The LORD. Rabbouni is the LORD, the one nailed to the cross. And he is no longer dead, but risen.

I wonder how many times I've looked at those around me, seeing 'only' their humanity. My children, my spouse, and the unexpected Telus salesperson at the door – how many times has my Shepherd called my name through people such as these, but I've turned only once? Remained deaf to the Shepherd's voice because I do not expect to find him living, least of all living here?

With only one turn, there is not yet salvation. With only one turn, I'm still living in the grief and sorrow at the loss of the one I hoped would redeem us ([Lk 24:21](#)). Turning once, I remain blind and deaf to the Shepherd calling me by name out from the sheepfold.

Can I open myself up to hearing his voice in persons so unlikely? in the unknown who stand before me? This [Octave of the Paschal Mystery](#), let's challenge ourselves to be open to turning twice, so that we, too, might proclaim with our lives to others: "I have seen the Lord!"

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## *For Your Reflection:*

- Revel in the Gospel reading for Easter. Spend time rereading it. What other things are present in the text which cause you to wonder at its meaning? Or mediate on the [Exsultet Prayer](#), sung at the Easter Vigil.
- Note or write down a word or phrase from the Gospel and work on remembering it throughout the week. Can you remember it when you first wake up? In the middle of brushing your teeth? Can you recite it before you climb into bed? How often can you remember it throughout the day?
- Commit to reading a book on our faith, such as [Mysterion: The Revelatory Power Of Sacramental Worldview](#) by Fr. Harrison Ayre, [One Thousand Gifts](#) by Ann Voskamp, or Pope Benedict XVI's Jesus of Nazareth: [Vol 1](#), [Vol 2](#) or [Vol 3](#).
- Increase your joy by keeping a gratitude list this week: keep track of things in which you can be thankful, however small (One Thousand Gifts, the book above, is a great guide in doing this).
- Take time to listen (on [the Hallow app](#) or [USCCB website](#)) or [read](#) the Gospel of the day with your family or with friends
- Take up doing morning or evening prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours with those you love – [you can join in online at Sing the Hours](#)
- Pray the Via Lucis, or The Way of Light, to celebrate Christ's resurrection with others from the parish or with your family at home (YouTube has several guides, including this one from [Pauline Books and Media](#))
- Host a meal and invite a family who is not in your inner circle. Whether they believe in Jesus or not, be present to them as though Jesus is calling your name through them.
- Sing an Easter hymn as a part of grace before your family meals.

Above all, celebrate joy, the joy of the Good News, Jesus Christ, who has risen from the grave. This Easter, may we proclaim along with Mary, "I have seen the Lord!" Alleluia!

[I Have Seen the Lord by The Vigil Project](#)

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