

Another Step

As you feel your soul rise into the glory of the Easter Season, rest in the expansive welcome and joy of the image *The Risen Lord*. Read John 20:1-18 and the other lections assigned for Easter Day (see p. 1). Each day, light a candle or throw streamers or dance to Easter hymns. Let your energy – which may have been profoundly inward during Lent – begin to turn outward and to sparkle in your work, your worship, and your leisure.

- Read Colossians 3:1-4 in the RSV or NRSV and then return to the very first verse and read it again. This phrase is pretty startling. What does that say to you about personal freedom, choice, what resurrection is about, whether it is in the future or in the present?
- Which “things above” do you most yearn for in your life? Is there a time when you felt you were living as someone “raised”? How did that feel? What made it easy to sustain? What made it hard to sustain?
- Bring Easter joy into every corner of your life. Set the table with the best china for every meal. Put flowers near your bed or at your work station. Wear bright colors. Hang a floral wreath on your door. Sing out loud in the shower. Greet the rising sun each day. How does it feel to make joy a daily *practice*?

Easter: Light

John 20:1-18

Additional scriptures:

Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Acts 10:34-43; Colossians 3:1-4

Lives again our glorious King: where, O death, is now your sting?

Once he died, our souls to save: where your victory, O grave?

– Charles Wesley

Gather & Center

Prepare the worship table, replacing the purple drape with white and gold. Fill the bowl with colorful ribbon and set a tall pillar candle in the center. Sprinkle the drape with gold stars or confetti. When everyone is gathered, light the candle and start the Easter segment of the video, joining in the following prayer. Pause as directed or whenever you wish to take time for discussion.

You, God, are both author and story;
you fold yourself into character;
now wrap yourself in my welcome.
Shimmer and dance and leap within me,
snapping along my nerves,
pouring from my fingertips,
shouting from my palate and tongue and teeth.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Enter & Engage

Before restarting the video, read aloud John 20:1-18. Pause the video for discussion as you wish.

Ask Yourself

Use these questions and suggestions to invite discussion, prayer, and reflection.

1. Read Matthew 28:1-10. How does this evangelist see the story in a different way than John?
2. In the Southern Hemisphere Easter is celebrated in autumn. If you live in the Northern Hemisphere, does that knowledge change your understanding of the story? What Easter images might you wonder about when you hear this story in a time of dying and going fallow, rather than a time of new growth?
3. Read Jeremiah 31:1-6. Jeremiah speaks of a “coming day” when God’s past grace and steadfast love will bring redemption. How do Jeremiah and John speak to one another about the future and the fulfillment of God’s realm? Do you feel that one of them reflects your own experience better, or are both necessary to your understanding of the resurrection?
4. How would you describe what the resurrection means to you? Is resurrection only experienced after death, or might it be a reality here and now? Do you expect that resurrection will restore past youth or health, or might it be something totally new?
5. What might resurrection mean in the context of a community of which you are a part – your church, your business, a mission in which you work? Would you recognize resurrection because something from the past would be restored, or, like Mary Magdalene, might you not recognize it at first and need some sign to alert you to the fact that it had happened?

Ponder & Pray

Gather near the worship table. Choose a favorite Easter hymn and sing it together. As you take leave of *The Risen Lord* and of this group experience, invite each person to share one place they hope Jesus will appear this Easter season. Then pray the following in unison.

Risen One,
as you walk beside us in this place and this time,
let me recognize you.
Then let me speak you, sing you, dance you;
let me hope you, promise you, reveal you;
let vision, and word, and yearning
be you, all you, only you.
Alleluia, Amen!