

5/26/24 SALT CO
Via Lucis: Following the Way of the Resurrection

Station III-Mary Meets the Risen Jesus

“Mary turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni’ (which means Teacher).”

John 20:14-16

WELCOME TO THE SALT CO!

When we say “Seasoned Adults” we mean this in two ways:

SEASONED AS IN...

Chronologically-- we’ve lived a lot of seasons of life

BUT more importantly-

Spiritually--- ...like when sodium and chlorine combined make SALT... by the grace of God, when we receive Christ into our lives we become like THIS [gesture: one hand—two hands—joined together]

We become something beautiful, a *new creation*...transformed and *transforming* for the rest of our lives.

JESUS CALLS US THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

It’s one way to describe our calling...one from which we never retire!

So, we call this the SALT CO—situated alongside Route 60+ where we pull over-to share some stories with each other of following and encountering our

Lord on our journeys—We do this to refresh, retool and REFUEL...for the ever-changing terrain on Route 60+.

This Spring we are exploring the Via Lucis, Latin for the Way of Light, following the Stations of the Resurrection- a new practice that complements and completes the 14 Stations of the Cross. The Via Lucis comprises 14 Stations of Jesus risen (HE IS RISEN!!), all based in the witness of the Gospels, the book of Acts, and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. (See the Via Lucis cards on your tables).

This morning, we come to the Third Station.

Do you ever catch yourself staring? G.K. Chesterton wrote about being caught by a dandelion growing up in a crack in a sidewalk. Maybe you love to watch a child's face as she watches other children playing. I find myself pausing for a long look at the Vinka we planted earlier this spring. I love they're doing great! It gives me a lift. When we find ourselves looking for a long time, "gazing", this is called "contemplation". This isn't intense concentration. It's more like "resting", of just being with. Our eyes "rest" on creation.

I love how Psalm 121 begins,

"I lift up my eyes to the hills-"

then as he gazes, what comes to him is a question...

"From where will my help come?"

My help comes from the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth."

So today we come to peer into this Third Station of the Resurrection, like looking through a window onto a "horizon" and as we do so we pay attention to what comes to us.

You and I are invited to come and look, and see... We'll use a way we practiced at our last SALT CO that goes like this:

1. To start we'll just get settled and quiet.
I'll read the scripture for this station, three times.

2. Then, we'll put up some art depicting the station and invite you to gaze on the scene for a few minutes. If you have difficulty seeing the art on the screens we have printed a copy in an envelope for each table.
3. I'll ask you to write, or draw, or sketch, or list what you're getting from peering through this first window, the first Station of the Resurrection.
4. Then at the table you can share with each other what you're seeing. Folks online at home write me your thoughts at dick.thompson@calvarywestlake.org.

Ready? Let's step into the Way of Light.

1. Get yourself settled. I invite you to place your hands on your lap palms up. I will read the word of God for us from the Gospel of John. This first time just take in John's description:

"Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:11-18

As I read this a second time, I invite you to imagine what Mary is experiencing. Imagine her face, her tone of voice, what she is thinking, and feeling and grieving. See Jesus. Imagine His face. His tone of voice. Notice what are you experiencing. What do you feel? Where do you feel this in your body? What thoughts are coming to mind? What questions?

As I read a third time, what comes to you that you want to say to Mary, to Jesus? What thoughts are coming to mind? What questions?

With the scripture we’ve just heard, take a few minutes to gaze on this painting by Rembrandt.

<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/noli-me-tangere-in-art/>

Take a minute to write, sketch, list, draw what you are noticing. Maybe questions, something you’ve never thought about before, something you suspect you’ll have to think about, explore...

Let’s go to the tables.

TABLE TALK (30 minutes)

- a. Share your name. Describe an experience with gardening, even if it was keeping something in a pot alive.
- b. What do you think John is hinting at when he writes that Mary thought Jesus was the “gardener”?
- c. What did you see when you were gazing at the artist’s interpretation?
- d. What was coming to you that you wanted to say to Mary? To Jesus?
- e. What question(s) does this Station raise for you? How might you pursue this?
- f. How does this Station help you?

This Station opens onto Mary weeping, overwhelmed in grief, loss, confusion. Maybe there are some here this morning who are living this. When we are in grief it is hard to see clearly.

To realize that we are not alone.

The two angelic beings in the tomb come alongside Mary. They do what we try to do when someone is in overwhelming loss and grief. They ask her why she is weeping- they invite her to speak out her pain, fear, her sense of loss, of helplessness- ***"I don't know where they have laid Him..."***

Then, John tells us, *she turned around*. Away from the empty tomb. Here's a word for us, to turn our eyes. To look up, and out. (The single greatest reality before our waking eyes 24/7/365 is "heaven"!)

Mary turns to see...

Jesus standing right there... but she did not realize it was Him.

It's hard to recognize Jesus with us when we are in grief. Our Lord helps her. He asks two questions: ***"Why are you weeping?"*** The same question the angels have asked that open up her hopes and fears- when we can share these with someone who really cares a deeper bond of friendship often results.

His second question: *Who are you looking for?*

We hearers of this scripture can see what Mary at this moment cannot see. We are cheering for her! MARY! He's right there! It's Jesus!

It's what we do for each other when we fall into grief, fear, helplessness, hopelessness.

Every day you and I practice His presence. Eldering majors in this. So, we can recognize how He is with us as He promised, how we can help each other see He is right here.

I love what happens in this moment- it's what's been happening throughout Jesus' ministry. In John's Gospel there are all these examples of how people fail to get it about Jesus, how they found him... my word for this... "weird":

-Nicodemus cannot understand this business about being born again, "from above"

-the wine steward at the wedding in Cana hasn't a clue what just happened to the jars of water...

-the woman at the well wonders what He means by "living water"

-the blind man's healing completely throws his parents and the religious experts

-then there's Mary and Martha, the disciples, there's Peter, the high priest, Pilate,

-and now here's Mary...

Let's call it, "Mistaken identity". She thinks she is talking to the "gardener"! So very wrong! And yet, in one of those ironic twists of God's grace,

So very right!!

Here's the "twist":

John's Gospel begins at the beginning, "In the beginning was the Word..." drawing us back to Genesis 1:1, and to the seven days of creation. The Hebrew week ended on Saturday- the seventh day. Jesus' resurrection took place on the 8th day, the first day of a new seven days. Here is a hint. Jesus' resurrection signals the beginning of new creation, *that is now underway*. Any who have given themselves to Him, are now part of and workers in the new creation!

Paul would write,

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new."

II Corinthians 5:17

Rembrandt and many artists portray the Risen Jesus holding a shovel! For digging. In the earth. The root of the word "human" is "humus". The Gardener turning the spade to create conditions for growth, fruit bearing.

Digging is hard, painful work. What condition is your “humus” in? What needs turning, nutrient, sun, water, pulling weeds, stones. He’s digging in you and me, tending us, creating conditions for fruit bearing- because Jesus is the Gardener!

James says we join Him in this tending.

“Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.” James 1:21

The resurrected and reigning Lord is the Gardener, cultivating new creation in us. Among us! Beginning with Mary Magdalene.

“Mary is the first person, ever, to experience the personal presence of the risen Lord.” Read that again! (From Dale Bruner, The Gospel of John, p. 1152)

Jesus says, “**Mariam!**” Mary responds, “**Rabbouni!**”

The Good Shepherd knows his own, by name. He sees her. She sees that He sees her. Knows her. His “I see you” changes her whole life. She steps into the new creation. With new purpose. A calling from which there is no “retirement”.

And so do we.

Check out this video (4:34)

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/royal-priesthood/>

Why does Jesus say to Mary, “**do not cling to Me...**”? Maybe, “Do not hold onto how it has been. Now all things are going to be new. Now I will be with you in an amazing new way.”

Now she, and we all, relate to Jesus in a new way, like this!

He is Lord of heaven and earth.

Serving Him until that Day when we will see Him face to face.

This Third Station opens us onto a profound, broad, wondrous horizon. It reveals to us how God sees us, calls us each by name, and to our work of eldering.