



# DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

Week of April 17, 2022 (John 20:1-18)

## Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Risen Lord, we thank you for the hope of Easter morning that resonates in song and word, in laughter and shout, filling this place with good news for what was no longer is: despair has become joy, fear has become courage, questions have become faith.

While we enjoy the hopefulness of this day we recognise that for many others the question—"why are you weeping?"—is all too real and all too present.

Too many of your beloved children, God of new life, live as though death has the last word, as though fear can trump compassion, as though violence is the source of true power. This day, of all days, is the day that laughs at those who thought using fear, violence and death are the means to their own success. For those who find themselves trapped by the...

## Devotions for Life A LifeGroup & Personal Resource

The Story: John 20:1-18

**Context:** And here we are. Easter has arrived. The tomb is empty, Christ has risen, and Mary Magdalene has seen the Lord. There is not much to say here in the way of context, other than, as the other Gospels do, we move straight from Jesus' Burial to Easter Sunday. The Gospels don't tell us about anything that happens in between. There could be a number of reasons for this, but most likely it's that nothing happened. Nothing except a lot of grief, probably a lot of tears, and a lot of uncertainty about what's next. But the "nothing" that happens also has some theological and liturgical implications: It is to say the time between Jesus' burial and Easter morning is a time of death, stillness, nothingness. As he lay lifeless beneath the earth, the earth, and perhaps our souls, lay still and silent as well.



...misguided decisions of others, for those who find themselves living on the streets, for those searching for meaningful employment, for those whose health in body or mind is poor, for those who struggle to raise their families, for those who know poverty, for those who know hunger, for those who know thirst, we pray that hope will find a way to break through and bring change.

May we never hold on to that which is dead, but rather... reach out for that which brings life.

Risen Lord, this is the day that you rose again; may we be glad in it, this day and every day. Hear our prayer. Amen.

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## Acts of Compassion & Justice:

### Contribute to Every Meal:

This month we're raising funds for the organization, Every Meal. Learn more about them at [www.everymeal.org](http://www.everymeal.org) and if you can, contribute their efforts in ending child hunger.



## Reading the Story:

Read the Resurrection narratives carefully. We make a lot of assumptions about them as we tend to mash them all together. But each Gospel has just as many differences as they do similarities. Track every little detail, looking for what John omits that other Gospels have, and what is particular to John. Also pay attention to who is present, who is not, where people are, and the overall setting and times of day referred to. And remember, though this is Easter, John still has a chapter and half to go. Not done yet!

## Questions for Discussion & Reflection:

- What words, images, or moments stand out to you in this passage?
- What surprised you in this reading? Was there something that seemed missing or that you don't recall about the Easter story?
- What time of day is it at the beginning of this story? Who is present at the tomb? How does the stone get moved?
- There's a lot of running early in this story? Why do you think that is? What does it imply about their states of mind and otherwise?
- What does it take for Mary to recognize Jesus? Why don't people recognize Jesus in the resurrection stories?
- When/where have you "seen the Lord" in such a way that you wanted to rush and tell others?
- Who is the main character (other than Jesus, of course) in this story?
- Did Jesus literally resurrect from the dead? Why does this question matter?
- How have you experienced resurrection in your own life?

