

# Joy Comes Alive

## John 20:1-18

### Flying Butterfly

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### Easter Messages

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### Today's Bible Reading

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### Additional Bible Readings

Acts 10: 34-43

Colossians 3:1-4

Matthew 28:1-10

**O God, in our times of loneliness, doubt, and turmoil, may we be reminded to entrust ourselves to your unfailing love. Grant us discernment about when to protect ourselves and when to make ourselves vulnerable. Empower us as communities of faith to witness in word and deed to your steadfast, never-failing, liberating, and transforming love.**

It is this learning to see that forms such a crucial component of John's Easter narrative in John 20:1-18. As Karoline Lewis notes in her commentary on this gospel (John. Fortress Press 2014), John does not tell us about God's grace but invites us to use all our senses to experience it. In John, grace tastes like the best wine; smells like a broad expanse of a grassy field when Jesus fed 5000; or like the very-dead stench of Lazarus giving way to the pound of perfume poured upon Jesus by Mary. Here, at the beginning of the 20th chapter, grace is the scent of a springtime garden at dawn; the sound of a beloved voice speaking our name; the leaping, uncontainable joy that propels Mary back into town, crying out that she has seen the Lord!

It is important to note that Mary alone stays until the morning light breaks. In John's gospel, light is a symbol of belief and understanding. So, while Peter and the Beloved Disciple see the empty tomb and the discarded cloths, they remain in the dark of human perception and understanding. Mary's stillness, her willingness to remain present in a space of grief, allows the light to shine around her. Like the light of dawn, her understanding and her vision grow until she can experience the fullness of the Resurrection; until it is the joy of God's presence rather than the fear of God's absence that compels her to proclaim what she has experienced: grace upon grace.