

## **Finding Peace in Seclusion** **March 23, 2020**

It has been about a week since I've found myself in the same room with another human being. For those of you with families to care for and keep up with, you have your own unique and intense challenges! For those of us who live alone, we are also way out of our comfort zone! Charley, my dog, is the only one I talk to in person: "So what do you want for supper this evening, Charley? Kibble with a little gravy dribbled over? OK, I can do that!"

I miss having another person to ponder with, to pray with, to share feelings about the dynamics and the dangers with. Charley is great but not one who could call my sons or care for me in the case of serious illness.

We all have our own unique stories, and there will be time for us to tell them to each other when this is all over.

For now, though, I am reminded of Mary Magdalene on Easter morning, as told to us in John 20. Remember, after Peter and John left the empty tomb and returned to their homes, she remained there and, desperately alone and grief-stricken, she is crying. She then notices the gardener and, I suspect with great intensity, even anger in her voice, she says to him: "WHERE IS HE? What have you done with him?? Tell me where you have put him, and I will get him!"

Right then, the gardener calls her name, "*Mary*," and she recognizes the voice of Jesus. Her emotions swing from abject despair to excitement, joy, and gratefulness. We are told Jesus has to remind her not to touch him

We can identify with what she's feeling, can't we? It is a powerful story.

It is one we might want to remember right now in these scary times. It's easy to feel alone and vulnerable. Could it be that we are focusing on our anger at the gardener when Jesus is trying to get our attention. Let's do this another way. Let's use some of the time freed up by social distancing and seclusion to quiet ourselves and our minds and listen--carefully and expectantly--for Jesus calling our name.

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