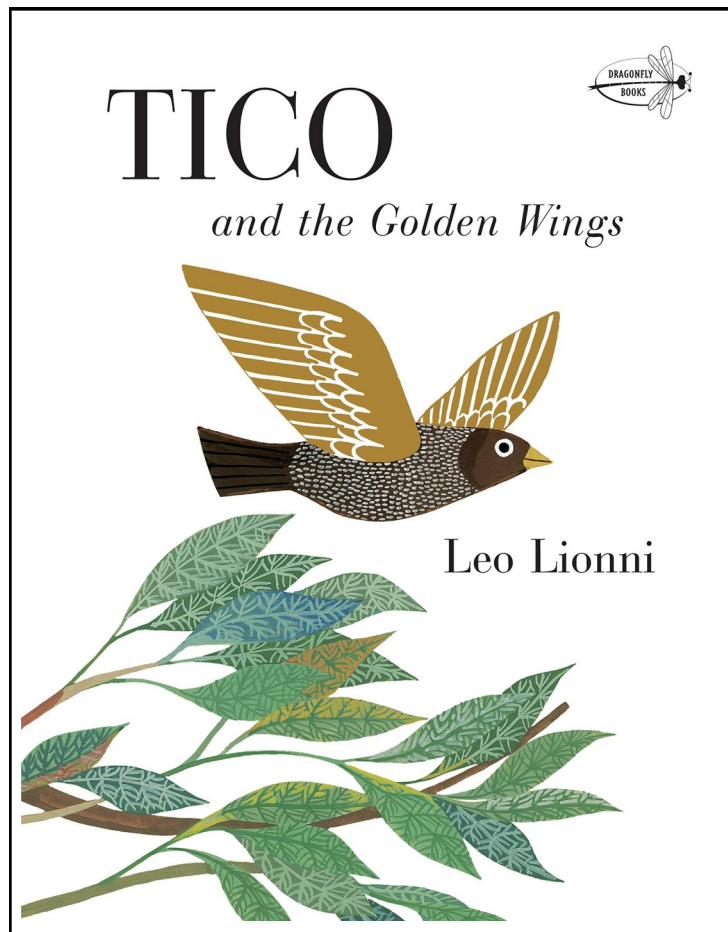


Living Grace

EASTER SUNDAY OF
THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

"THE EASTER EXPERIENCE LEAVES US FOREVER CHANGED!"



In *TICO and the Golden Wings*, we meet a little bird who was born with no wings. Without wings, Tico could not fly like all the other birds which made him very, very different. What birds do is fly! One night Tico had an unusual dream, that he had magical golden wings. When his wish for a pair of golden wings is granted, his envious friends want nothing to do with him. So once again, Tico felt very, very different. He also felt a tug on his heart to share his rare gift by offering a golden wing to others in need. First, he saw a poor father needing medicine for his sick child, and Tico knew he had to help them. If the wings were magic for him, surely they would be magic for others. The magic helped the man get the money he needed to buy his child medicine, and the boy was healed. Other birds could not heal people by sharing their golden wings, which meant that Tico WAS different.

Read-aloud video link: EasterSunTico.MOV

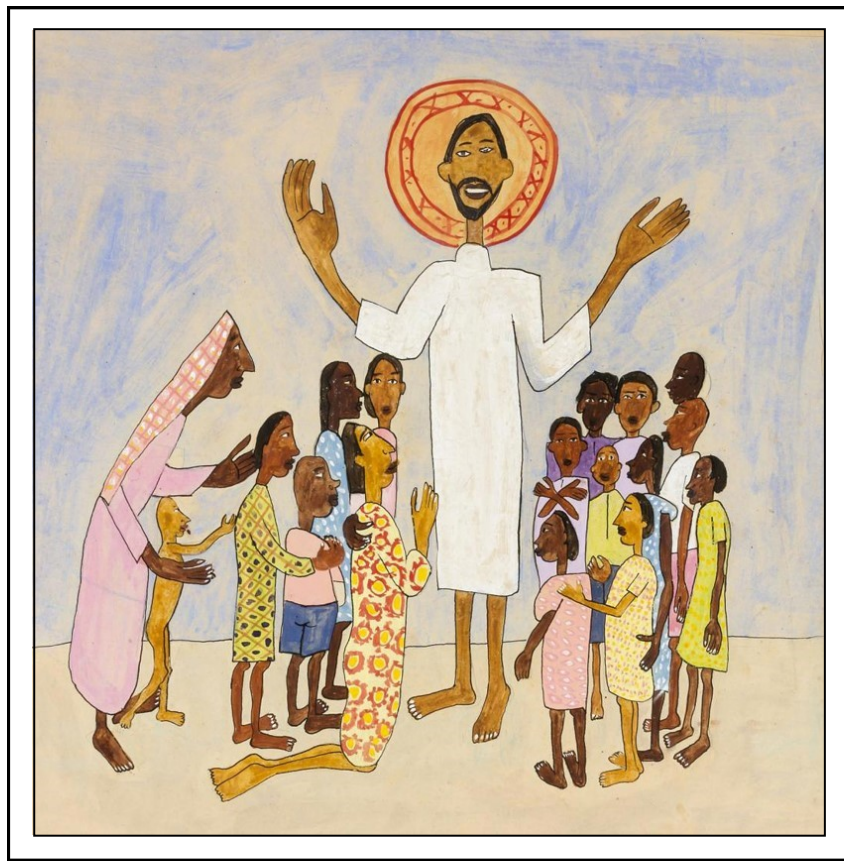
Sunday Gospel

JOHN 20:1-9

On the first day of the week,
Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning,
while it was still dark,
and saw the stone removed from the tomb.
So she ran and went to Simon Peter
and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them,
“They have taken the Lord from the tomb,
and we don’t know where they put him.”
So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.
They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter
and arrived at the tomb first;
he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.
When Simon Peter arrived after him,
he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there,
and the cloth that had covered his head,
not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.
Then the other disciple also went in,
the one who had arrived at the tomb first,
and he saw and believed.
For they did not yet understand the Scripture
that he had to rise from the dead.

Art & Faith

EXPLORING THE BEAUTY & TRADITION
OF SACRED ART



COME UNTO ME, LITTLE CHILDREN
Oil painting by William H. Johnson ~ 1944
American Art Museum ~ Washington D.C. ~ United States

EXPLORING THE ART:

William H. Johnson used a primitive style of painting, known as “folk art”, to depict the experience of African-Americans during the 1930s and '40s. He produced hundreds of works that spanned several decades as well as several continents. Throughout his life, Johnson faced seemingly insurmountable hardships, but persevered in pursuing his life as an artist, using talents that God gave him, against all odds. This is what we learn from the Paschal mystery - the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus - which was the work that God sent his Son to accomplish on earth. As we grow and mature, we discover the unique talents that God has given each of us. As we put these talents to use, we unfold the purpose that God has sent each of us to accomplish on earth. Throughout our lives, we will struggle, get knocked down, and get back up, over and over again, as we pursue our purpose in life. This is the Paschal mystery.

The term “folk art” was coined during the 1700s and 1800s to describe art made by craftsmen, manual laborers, peasants, tradespeople, and working-class folk. Because many folk artists have no formal art training, artistic rules such as perspective (drawing objects three-dimensionally in order to give them the illusion of depth and distance) and proportion (drawing objects so that their size and shape are harmonious to one another) usually are not followed. Folk artists often use simple artistic techniques, bright colors, and childlike perspectives, creating art as a means of self-expression rather than creating art that is “correct.”

Although Johnson was a formally trained artist, he used this style in his artwork. Historic events and scenes from the Bible were favorite subjects for folk painters. Deeply rooted in tradition, folk art is an artist’s feelings, ideas, expressions, and customs brought to life. Folk artists rely on experience, community, heritage, and imagination, rather than formal training, to create their unique works of art. It is art that is felt rather than taught. It is used as a means to express and Raise Up the human spirit.

ART OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Making the Connections

FOR ADULTS

CHRISTIANS THROUGH THE RISEN CHRIST ARE AWAKENED AND CHARGED TO SHARE GOD'S GRACE AND HEALING LOVE.

Tico was a different kind of bird. He could not fly, and birds, well they fly!! But that didn't stop Tico from dreaming that he had magic golden wings. His dream came true when the wishing bird gave him some beautiful magic golden wings, but those wings still made him different than the other birds. Tico felt a tug on his heart, to share his rare gift by offering a golden wing to a poor father needing medicine for his sick child. Tico happily gave him a golden wing, and the boy was healed. Tico was overjoyed and found the next person to share his healing magic with.

Have you wondered when Jesus knew he was different? Jesus came from his heavenly Father where angels can fly. Jesus became like one of us. Humans can't fly, but Jesus was different. Jesus knew he was different by the time he was a teenager. He knew he had a special call and mission. Jesus and Tico knew they were given a unique purpose, and they both dared to be different. Jesus, like Tico, had a transformational experience. Jesus was baptized and given a special mission. As we learn in Lent, Jesus went into the desert alone, for forty days and forty nights, to explore that mission.

Upon his return Jesus was transfigured, and charged for his mission, in front of his very closest friends. They also knew he was different because he could heal people of ailments and thousands of people gathered to learn and follow in his ways. However, all of that was not enough. For Jesus' mission to be complete, he had to give his super powers away just like Tico. If he did, than all could do the super works he did.

Tico dreamt his whole life of being able to fly. His golden wings gave him the ability to do so, but others needed what he had. So bit by bit, one by one, Tico gave away to others the very gift he had yearned for and dreamt of. Jesus did the same thing. Jesus gave away his very life, so that we too might live like him.

Jesus and Tico both gave themselves away to be able to fly forever - that is the Easter Experience! Through Jesus we are each changed and charged with our own mission. We are awakened to our own gifts and the grace to do his works - to be his people and to share his transforming, healing love all over the world. It is so enlivening that, like Tico, we will not be able to sleep. "Awake oh sleepers from the dead", we sing at Easter. For Christ is our life, that's the Easter Experience!! And.....He is Risen, He is Risen indeed, in us! Joyous Easter!

Making the Connections

FOR CHILDREN

YOUR STORY: Have there ever been times that you have felt different? What has made you feel that way? When is different special?

THE CHILDRENS' STORY: How was Tico special? What made Tico want to give his golden wings away?

THE GOSPEL STORY: How was Jesus different? How was he special? What made Jesus want to be different and be with us? When Jesus was in the temple as a teenager, the elders saw something different in him. Have you felt that sometimes people see something different in you? Something special? What happened to people when Jesus and Tico gave away their very selves for others? Jesus gave of himself so that we can have the super powers he had while here on earth. How is that the Easter Experience?

How is the world forever changed because of what Jesus did? This Easter, how can we give God's healing love and grace away? Joy is the product of sacrificial love. Tico, who didn't look like the other birds, was wide awake on the inside. How are Christians "awake"? Does that make us look different? How is becoming "awake" the Easter Experience?

Biblical Background

JOHN 20:1-9

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING: The story takes place at the tomb of Jesus which was located just outside the west facing gate that allowed entrance to the city of Jerusalem. The tomb was carved into an abandoned rock quarry that had long since been played out. The owner of the tomb was a religious leader of the Jewish community who was sympathetic to Jesus and his message about the Kingdom of God. Mary and her companion run to make a report to Peter and John about the fact that the tomb was empty. These Apostles (and other disciples) would have been found in the Upper Room, behind locked doors. This same Upper Room was where Jesus had celebrated the Passover, our Last Supper, on the night that he was later going to be betrayed and arrested.

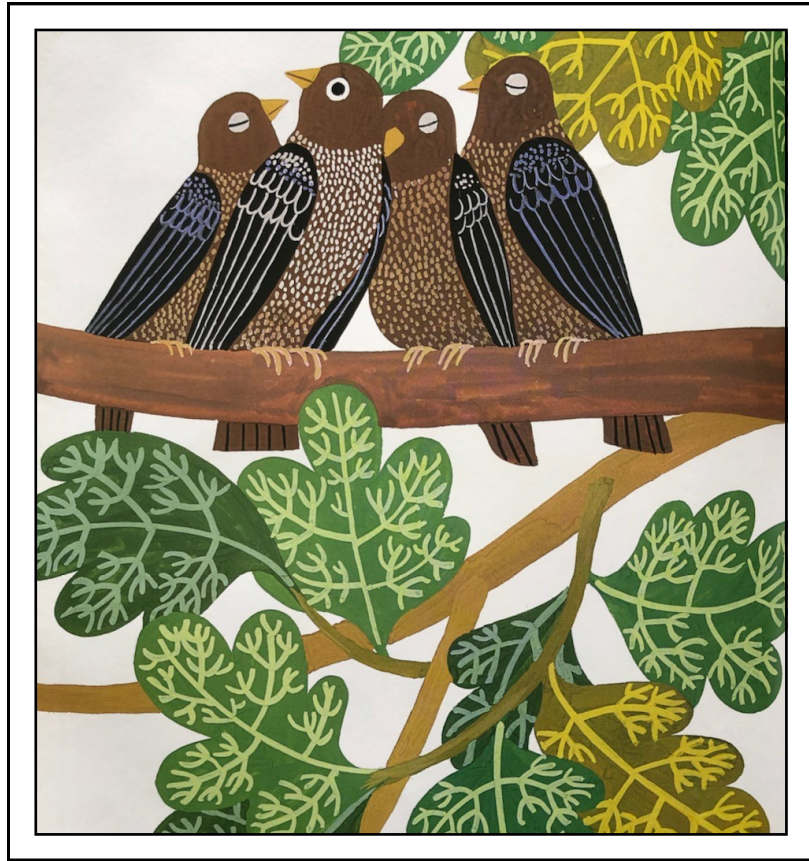
TERMS: "SAW" There is a lesson in Greek that makes this Gospel even more compelling. It has to do with the English translation of the word "saw" in the Gospel of John. Our language requires that we translate three very different Greek words in the original text with a single word in. John arrives at the entrance of the tomb and he "saw" something. Peter arrives after John, goes inside the tomb, and he "saw" something. Then John enters the tomb with Peter, and he "saw" something, again. In the original Greek, John arrives at the entrance, and he "blepo". Peter arrives, goes inside, and he "ido". Then John goes inside the tomb, and he "thereo" the scene. What is going on? John arrives at the entrance and reveals what he actually saw, without any further comprehension. That is the meaning behind the Greek word "blepo". Peter comes on the scene and enters the tomb for a better look. He takes his time, and "ido", describes the details within. Finally, John enters the same chamber as Peter, and he "thereo" the scene, forming a theory about what has happened. The result is that both Peter and John leave the tomb convinced that Jesus has risen!

CULTURAL INSIGHT: The tomb of Jesus was new and did not belong to any member of his family. It belonged to Joseph of Arimathea who was not related to Jesus, which means that the body was placed in the new tomb temporarily and would not remain there forever. This explains why the women arrive early on Sunday morning wondering who would roll the stone away for them. The tombs of this time were a two-chambered construction - an outer "weeping chamber" and an inner chamber with burial niches for the dead. John arrives at the entrance to the weeping chamber but does not go in. Peter comes upon the scene and enters the weeping chamber for closer examination. John then enters the weeping chamber and sees what Peter has been looking at. They both realize Jesus has conquered death and the grave!

INSIGHT INTO MEANING: Biblical faith is something that develops and deepens over time. This is one of the lessons of the Gospel this week. The apostles, Peter and John, need time to carefully consider all possibilities before they come to the conclusion that Jesus had in fact risen from the dead. Confident of this fact, they then make their way back to the other disciples to announce this good news. We can all find ourselves on some point of this same faith life continuum. Some of us only "see", others are willing to carefully examine, and in the process, formulate a theory that might explain the transformation in our life. Others are ready to jump in to the deep water. They see and they believe. Where are you this Easter?

Family Activities

SHARING THE MISSION AT HOME
AND IN THE WORLD



QUESTION OF THE WEEK: How has your Easter Experience left you awakened? How have you been awakened as a family?

CHARACTER QUALITIES: SELF-EMPTYING BRINGS JOY
BEING ALIVE IN CHRIST

FAMILY ACTIVITIES: Conduct some Easter Joy “experiments”. Look for examples throughout history of people who have emptied themselves and become alive in Christ.

Make a tomb for your family table, and on Good Friday after praying the Stations of the Cross, put a figure of Jesus in the tomb and cover it with a rock. On Easter, discover the tomb empty and Christ Risen (after parents have hidden him). Look throughout the house to find the Risen Christ where you wouldn’t expect to find him. Have a prize for the family member who finds the figure of Jesus.

Throughout the weeks of Easter, each night share how you have “found the Lord” at work in the lives of others and in your own life each day. Talk about what it means to be awakened to see Christ healing and redeeming the world all around us, knowing it is because of your Easter Experience that you can see!!

Gospel Illustration

"REDEEMED" BY VICKI SHUCK



*Never before in our lifetime has the world been brought so closely together as one
in the heart of the Paschal Mystery.*

*Easter is our Hope, new life awaits to burst forth! Jesus has Risen, the Easter Experience is Here!
He has Risen Indeed!*