

Word had reached two eighth-grade boys that in Catholic high school no one takes religion class seriously, so they decided, "Why bother with it in eighth grade?" They quit doing their homework and read comic books during class. The teacher complained to the principal and she decided to call them in one by one to straighten them out. The first boy entered the principal's office and sat down. "Johnny," she intoned, "where is God?" "What?" the kid said. "You heard me, where is God?" The kid didn't know what to say. After a few moments he got up from his chair, looked under the principal's desk, inside the closet, behind the file cabinet. He finally turned back to her and said, "I don't know." She said, "Get out of here." Johnny ran for the door and closed it behind him. His friend was outside waiting to be called in and asked him, "What is it, what does she want?" He said, "This is really spooky. God's turned up missing and they think we had something to do with it."

Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene must have felt just as perplexed when God turned up missing from the tomb. When the Gospel says that Peter peered into the empty tomb and believed, it's not clear whether he believed in the resurrection or simply that God was missing. After all, Mary Magdalene immediately begins a search. She stumbles onto the gardener, accuses him of taking the body, and only then realizes this is no ordinary gardener, this is Jesus, risen from the dead.

We have a custom at Eastertime reminds us of the empty tomb. We hunt for Easter eggs. It's as if the eggs, themselves a sign of new life, are missing, and we must find them.

The great surprise of Easter, of course, is that Jesus isn't missing at all, He is risen. He is not missing from the tomb, he is present in the garden. We all face those moments in life when we wonder, "Where is God?" But we are blinded by our own tears. God is present--here in the world, here in this church, here with our friends, here inside of us, in the very tears we shed. Jesus is here.