

For the Love of an Imperative Verb John 20:1-18

Easter Day, Principal Mass, Years A, B, and C, RCL

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one who Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as of yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, **tell** [εἰπέ, **eipé**] me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, “**Do** not **hold on to** [ἅπτου, **háptou**] me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But **go** [πορεύου, **poreúou**] to my brothers and **say** [εἰπέ, **eipé**] to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”; and she told them that he had said these things to her. [NRSV89]

20:15

εἰπέ, **eipé**; *vb*: 2nd aor act **imperative** 2nd pers sg from λέγω:

translations: **tell** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also

di [IAdNT]

20:17

ἄπτοῦ, **háptou**; *vb: pres mid imperative 2nd pers sg from ἄπτομαι:*

translations: **do** [not] **hold on to** [NRSV89, NIV11], **holding on to** [NAB], also **cling to** [ESV, NJB, NKJV, Brown], **touching** [NGEINT], **do** [not] **touch** [NRSVue], **agarres** [IAdNT]

Barrett: "The present imperative with μή, **mē**, 'not,' in a prohibition signifies the breaking off of an action already in progress, or sometimes of the attempt to perform an action."

Brown: "The use of the present imperative, literally 'Stop touching me', probably implies that she is already touching him and is to desist; however, it can mean that she is trying to touch him and he is telling her she should not."

Crossett: See Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, pp. 992f., for a detailed discussion of rationale for translations.

Levine and Brettler: "It is not clear whether Jesus is asking Mary to let go of him, or warning her not to touch him."

πορεύου, **poreúou**; *vb: pres mid / pass imperative 2nd pers sg from πορεύω:*

translations: **go** [NRSV89, ESV, NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, NKJV, NRSVue, Brown], also **vete** [IAdNT]

εἰπέ, **eipé**; *vb: 2nd aor act imperative 2nd pers sg from λέγω:*

translations: **say** [NRSV89, ESV, NKJV, NRSVue], also **tell** [NAB, NGEINT, NIV11, NJB, Brown], **di** [IAdNT]

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