

GLIMPSES- THEN AND NOW

by Patricia M. Kent



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Glimpses— Then and Now

A Lenten series with candle extinguishing

Patricia M. Kent

PRODUCTION NOTES

Glimpses – Then and Now is a collection of brief dramas, one for each Sunday of Lent, Palm Sunday, and Easter Sunday. Based on the Lectionary Cycle C, each Sunday is based on the Gospel story and includes a reflection of one or more individuals from a biblical perspective and then, in response, from a current perspective. Both characters (or sets of characters) join in a short prayer or response combining their perspectives as one. The Narrator then responds with a scriptural response and extinguishes one candle on the Lenten wreath (a simple wreath made of six purple outer candles and one white Christ candle in the center, surrounded by a wreath of thorns).

Palm Sunday contains two short responses, one following the opening processional or “parade” of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, and one at the end of the service leading into Holy Week. During these two dramas, biblical characters and current characters begin to notice each other and interact. At the end of the service (or during a Maundy Thursday service, if you hold one), all characters decide to leave as they agree on the danger of standing up for Jesus, and the Christ candle is also extinguished. On Easter the characters return and discuss as one the joy and hope of the Resurrection and challenge everyone to share the Good News.

Two to six characters are needed each week – sometimes two males, sometimes two females, and some mixed groups. Parts may be memorized or read as a reader’s theatre. Costumes may be a simple scarf or hat in biblical tradition, or full costume. Each Sunday’s performance is approximately five minutes in length.

Glimpses – Then and Now adds a unique Lenten focus for worship groups of all denominations. Tied to the Scriptures, the dramas offer a traditional focus, but also include an individual introspection, allowing the audience to identify with the characters both biblical and current.

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First Sunday of Lent

Jesus in the Wilderness

Cast of Characters:

BIBLICAL WOMAN

CURRENT WOMAN

Props: Computer or iPad and some biblical period project, like kneading bread or weaving.

Set: A simple stage is set with two small tables slightly on each side of Center Stage.

Lenten Wreath: All six candles on the Lenten wreath are lit. The Christ candle is also lit.

1 *(At each table a WOMAN is sitting, one dressed in current*
 2 *style/clothing, one dressed in biblical style — simply a woven*
 3 *scarf/shawl or full costume — with their backs partially*
 4 *turned to each other. The CURRENT WOMAN is working on*
 5 *computer/iPad and the BIBLICAL WOMAN is kneading*
 6 *bread, weaving, or working on some other appropriate project.*
 7 *Both are frozen in place. NARRATOR is standing off to the*
 8 *side, observing what is going on. As the light comes up on the*
 9 *BIBLICAL WOMAN, she begins to move, working on her*
 10 *project and perhaps humming to herself.)*

11 **BIBLICAL WOMAN:** I heard that the man everyone is talking
 12 about, I think they call him Jesus, headed out into the
 13 wilderness and was gone for forty days. Why would
 14 anyone do that? The wilderness is a scary place, and
 15 there is very little food or water. Some believe he has
 16 the power to change stones into bread, but he chose not
 17 to do it. I know that if I were hungry, I would do
 18 whatever was in my power to get food. And if he is the
 19 leader that all are looking for, that God is supposed to
 20 send to save us, he sure doesn't act like it. Surely God
 21 will send someone who is capable of rescuing us from
 22 this oppression we are under. Someone who can free us
 23 from being slaves in our own lands. Whoever God
 24 chooses to send, I hope he sends them quickly. I am

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1 **tired.** (*Light dims on BIBLICAL WOMAN and she freezes*
 2 *again. As light comes up on CURRENT WOMAN, she begins*
 3 *moving and working on computer and maybe talking to self.)*

4 **CURRENT WOMAN:** I heard some people talking at church
 5 the other day about taking time to be apart from others
 6 during Lent to explore the dark places in our lives and
 7 be closer to God. Why would anyone want to do that?
 8 Being alone with my feelings and thoughts is scary to
 9 me, and I sometimes get more confused and restless.
 10 Some believe that spending time in reflection and
 11 meditation helps you to accept where you are and
 12 embrace the path ahead of you. I know I just want some
 13 peace now. After all, God promises to keep us safe.
 14 Going on a wilderness journey isn't my idea of being
 15 safe. Surely God will get me out of this rat race and free
 16 me from the demands of my life. Whatever God does, I
 17 hope he does it quickly. I am tired. (*Light dims on*
 18 *CURRENT WOMAN and she freezes. After several seconds the*
 19 *light comes up on both WOMEN. They both look up and speak*
 20 *in unison.)*

21 **BIBLICAL and CURRENT WOMEN:** God, I am tired and
 22 afraid. Please be with me on my journey, free me from
 23 my fears, and feed my soul. (*Lights dim again. Both*
 24 *WOMEN freeze. The NARRATOR comes forward, standing*
 25 *slightly to the side of the Lenten wreath.)*

26 **NARRATOR:** Jesus said, "I'm telling you the most solemn
 27 and sober truth now: Whoever believes in me has real
 28 life, eternal life. I am the Bread of Life. Your ancestors
 29 ate the manna bread in the desert and died. But now
 30 here is Bread that truly comes down out of heaven.
 31 Anyone eating this Bread will not die, ever. I am the
 32 Bread — living Bread! — who came down out of heaven.
 33 Anyone who eats this Bread will live — and forever! The
 34 Bread that I present to the world so that it can eat and
 35 live is myself, this flesh-and-blood self" (*John 6:47-51*).
 36 (*NARRATOR puts out one candle with candle snuffer and*
 37 *leaves stage. The two WOMEN follow after him/her.)*

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Second Sunday of Lent

Warned by Pharisees

Cast of Characters:

BIBLICAL MAN

CURRENT MAN

Props: Computer/iPad, some period project involving leather or wood, envelope.

Set: A simple stage is set with two small tables slightly on each side of Center Stage.

Lenten Wreath: Five candles on the Lenten wreath are lit. The Christ candle is also lit.

1 *(At each table a MAN is sitting, one dressed in current*
 2 *style/clothing, one dressed in biblical style — simply a cloth*
 3 *tied around his head or full costume — with their backs*
 4 *partially turned to each other. The CURRENT MAN is working*
 5 *on computer/iPad and the BIBLICAL MAN is working with*
 6 *leather, wood, or some period project. Both are frozen in place.*
 7 *NARRATOR is standing off to the side observing what is going*
 8 *on. As the light comes up on the BIBLICAL MAN, he begins to*
 9 *move, working on his project and maybe humming/talking to*
 10 *self.)*

11 **BIBLICAL MAN:** What is this Jesus talking about now? If he
 12 returns to Jerusalem, he will very likely be killed. And
 13 he talks about a fox? And then he claims we have not
 14 followed him, even though that is what he's longed for.
 15 Well, after studying the Torah and the prophets for all
 16 these years, I am not going to just jump up and follow
 17 him. That's asking too much. And besides, who says he
 18 is right? Why would I want to give up the security of my
 19 teaching and work to follow an unknown? I follow the
 20 laws the best I can so I am not ashamed or sorry about
 21 my life. Yet ... *(Pauses to think to self)* I still feel sometimes
 22 as if I am missing something in my life. I hope I can fill
 23 that void somehow. *(Light dims on BIBLICAL MAN and he*
 24 *freezes again. As light comes up on CURRENT MAN, he begins*

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1 *moving and working on computer and maybe talking to self.)*
 2 **CURRENT MAN:** *(Opening an envelope on table)* I wonder what
 3 the church wants now. It seems they are always talking
 4 about giving to this and giving to that, and then let's go
 5 to the food bank or hand out sandwiches to the
 6 homeless. Isn't that what the government programs are
 7 for? I pay my taxes and support causes when I can.
 8 After all, I have bills to pay, and I work hard for my
 9 money. I'm involved in a lot of other activities besides
 10 the church, and I don't have time to be involved in all
 11 they are asking. Why would I want to give up the
 12 security of my job and money to become involved in
 13 things I feel uncomfortable with? I go to church as
 14 much as I can and throw some money in the plate when
 15 I am there. That's better than most people do. Yet ...
 16 *(Pauses to think to self)* sometimes I still feel as if I am
 17 missing something in my life. I hope I can fill that void
 18 somehow. *(Light dims on CURRENT MAN and he freezes.*
 19 *After several seconds the light comes up on both MEN. They*
 20 *both look up and speak in unison.)*

21 **BIBLICAL and CURRENT MAN:** God, I am confused and
 22 looking for security and protection. Please help me find
 23 the peace that you say you give to the world. *(Lights dim*
 24 *again. Both MEN freeze. The NARRATOR comes forward,*
 25 *standing slightly to the side of the Lenten wreath.)*

26 **NARRATOR:** "Judas *(Not Iscariot)* said, 'Master, why is it that
 27 you are about to make yourself plain to us but not to the
 28 world?'

29 'Because a loveless world,' said Jesus, 'is a sightless
 30 world. If anyone loves me, he will carefully keep my
 31 word and my Father will love him — we'll move right
 32 into the neighborhood! Not loving me means not
 33 keeping my words. The message you are hearing isn't
 34 mine. It's the message of the Father who sent me.

35 'I'm telling you these things while I'm still living with
 36 you. The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will
 37 send at my request, will make everything plain to you.
 38 He will remind you of all the things I have told you. I'm

1 leaving you well and whole. That's my parting gift to
2 you. Peace. I don't leave you the way you're used to
3 being left — feeling abandoned, bereft. So don't be
4 upset. Don't be distraught' ” (*John 14:22-27*). (*NARRATOR*
5 *puts out one candle with candle snuffer and leaves stage. The*
6 *two MEN follow after him/her.*)

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Third Sunday of Lent

The Fig Tree

Cast of Characters:

BIBLICAL WOMAN

CURRENT WOMAN

Props: Two flowerpots and gardening tools (some modern, some primitive).

Set: A simple stage is set with two small tables slightly on each side of Center Stage.

Lenten Wreath: Four candles on the Lenten wreath are lit. The Christ candle is also lit.

1 *(At each table a WOMAN is sitting, one dressed in current*
 2 *style/clothing, one dressed in biblical style – simply a*
 3 *cloth/scarf tied around head or full costume – with their backs*
 4 *partially turned to each other. The CURRENT WOMAN and*
 5 *the BIBLICAL WOMAN are watering/planting in small*
 6 *flowerpots. Both are frozen in place. NARRATOR is standing*
 7 *off to the side, observing what is going on. As the light comes up*
 8 *on the BIBLICAL WOMAN, she begins to move, working on her*
 9 *project and maybe humming/talking to self.)*

10 **BIBLICAL WOMAN:** I remember how my father used to care
 11 for our fig trees. Oh, how he loved those trees! He
 12 pruned them, he dug around them, he brought manure
 13 and leaves to fertilize them, and water ... he always
 14 brought buckets of life-giving water. Many times as a
 15 little girl when I was tired of working in the hot sun, I
 16 was ready to give up. I would say, “Daddy, these trees
 17 are never going to have figs.”

18 And Daddy would say, “I have faith in these trees,
 19 daughter. Next year they will bear fruit.” And so one
 20 year they did. They were the sweetest fruits I had ever
 21 tasted. And without my father’s faith and nurturing, I
 22 would have never experienced their sweet taste. So as
 23 Jesus talked about the fig tree, my thoughts went to my
 24 father. How much our Father in heaven loves us too —

1 as much as my father loved the fig trees. He will never
 2 give up. He will always nurture us with love and food
 3 and water. Yet my days on earth are numbered. I must
 4 use his gifts now, before it is too late. (*Light dims on*
 5 *BIBLICAL WOMAN and she freezes again. As light comes up*
 6 *on CURRENT WOMAN, she begins moving and working on*
 7 *her project and maybe talking to self.*)

8 **CURRENT WOMAN:** How my mother loved her flowers and
 9 vegetables! She would spend hours pruning, fertilizing,
 10 watering, and just loving ... loving with her words and
 11 care and life-giving spirit. Many times as a girl I would
 12 get bored and wander off. I had more important things
 13 to do and couldn't see how the flowers would ever
 14 bloom or we would ever eat vegetables from the small
 15 sprouts. Mother would say, "Be patient, daughter. With
 16 love and care they will blossom and produce."

17 I would always reply. "I am too busy, Mother."

18 But one day Mother would come in with beautiful
 19 blossoms, and the whole house would smell of a new
 20 world. And fresh, crunchy vegetables would become a
 21 major part of my diet, even though I had much earlier
 22 succumbed to the sugar, salt, and fat of an affluent
 23 society. How free and whole I felt during those
 24 summers! So when we read Scripture about dead
 25 branches and fig trees, my thoughts go to my mother.
 26 How much God in heaven loves and cares for us too.
 27 When we allow God to nurture and give us that life-
 28 giving spirit, how free and productive we are. How we
 29 flourish and make new worlds outside our windows,
 30 just like Mother's garden. Yet, like my mother, my days
 31 on earth are numbered. I must use the gifts given to me
 32 now, before it is too late. (*Light dims on CURRENT*
 33 *WOMAN and she freezes. After several seconds the light comes*
 34 *up on both WOMEN. They both look up and speak in unison.*)

35 **BIBLICAL and CURRENT WOMEN:** Father, (*Spoken by*
 36 *BIBLICAL WOMAN*) Mother, (*Spoken by CURRENT*
 37 *WOMAN*) I am longing for your nurture and love. Help
 38 me to know that you love me, now and always. Now is

1 the time to accept that love and create beautiful
2 kingdoms of your making. (*Lights dim again. Both*
3 *WOMEN freeze. The NARRATOR comes forward, standing*
4 *slightly to the side of the Lenten wreath.*)

5 **NARRATOR: “So what do we do? Keep on sinning so God can**
6 **keep on forgiving? I should hope not! If we’ve left the**
7 **country where sin is sovereign, how can we still live in**
8 **our old house there? Or didn’t you realize we packed up**
9 **and left there for good? That is what happened in**
10 **baptism. When we went under the water, we left the old**
11 **country of sin behind; when we came up out of the**
12 **water, we entered into the new country of grace — a**
13 **new life in a new land!”** (*Romans 6:1-3*). (*NARRATOR puts*
14 *out one candle with candle snuffer and leaves stage. The two*
15 *WOMEN follow after him/her.*)

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Fourth Sunday of Lent

The Prodigal Son

Cast of Characters:

BIBLICAL YOUNGER

BIBLICAL OLDER

CURRENT YOUNGER

CURRENT OLDER

Lenten Wreath: Three candles on the Lenten wreath are lit. The Christ candle is also lit.

1 *(Four PEOPLE are On-stage. Two dressed in biblical costume*
 2 *— simply a cloth/scarf tied around head or full costume — two*
 3 *in current dress, one older and one younger in each couple. The*
 4 *two BIBLICAL CHARACTERS are slightly to the left of Center*
 5 *Stage. The two CURRENT CHARACTERS are slightly to right*
 6 *of Center Stage. Both COUPLES appear to be engaged in*
 7 *conversation but are frozen in place. NARRATOR is standing*
 8 *off to the side, observing what is going on. As the light comes up*
 9 *on BIBLICAL OLDER and YOUNGER, they begin to engage in*
 10 *conversation.)*

11 **BIBLICAL YOUNGER:** I heard Jesus talking today about a
 12 son returning to his father. I had to come home. I had to
 13 talk to you. *(BIBLICAL OLDER begins to interrupt, but*
 14 *BIBLICAL YOUNGER won't allow it.)* No ... no, listen to me.
 15 I am so sorry. I know you can never forgive me like in
 16 the story, but please at least allow me to visit.

17 **BIBLICAL OLDER:** *(Faltering in speech, visibly emotional)* You
 18 are home ... I-I know you have broken the laws of the
 19 Torah and disrespected your elders. But ... I want you
 20 home ... to stay. I love you.

21 **BIBLICAL YOUNGER:** *(Pauses, looks down, then up.)* Can it be
 22 true? I do not deserve your forgiveness. Allow me to
 23 sleep in the servant quarters.

24 **BIBLICAL OLDER:** No ... you are mine. Whatever has
 25 happened is over. What is mine is yours. *(Both characters*
 26 *embrace, then separate slightly as lights dim. Light dims on*

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- 1 *BIBLICAL COUPLE* and they freeze again. As light comes up
 2 on *CURRENT COUPLE*, they begin to engage in conversation.)
- 3 **CURRENT YOUNGER:** I was so angry with you. I didn't —
- 4 **CURRENT OLDER:** (*Interrupts.*) You were angry? How do you
 5 think I felt? You went against what I told you. You went
 6 against everything I believed in. What were you
 7 thinking?
- 8 **CURRENT YOUNGER:** I guess I wasn't thinking. I've been so
 9 stupid.
- 10 **CURRENT OLDER:** (*Pauses slightly.*) You know, when I was
 11 your age, I did some pretty stupid things too. I guess it's
 12 amazing we're both still alive. But I know now that I
 13 cannot be without you. I want you home more than
 14 anything.
- 15 **CURRENT YOUNGER:** You mean ... you want me back? How
 16 can you forgive me?
- 17 **CURRENT OLDER:** How can I not? Your being home makes
 18 me the happiest person in the world.
- 19 **CURRENT YOUNGER:** Being home makes me happier.
- 20 **CURRENT OLDER:** Come on in. We have soup on the stove.
 21 (*Both characters embrace, then separate slightly as lights dim.*
 22 *Light dims on CURRENT COUPLE and they freeze. After*
 23 *several seconds the light comes up on both COUPLES. They all*
 24 *look up and speak in unison.*)
- 25 **CURRENT and BIBLICAL COUPLES:** Forgiving and
 26 forgiven. A moment of reconciliation. A moment that
 27 changes lives and changes the world. God forgive us.
 28 (*Lights dim again. Both CURRENT and BIBLICAL*
 29 *COUPLES freeze. The NARRATOR comes forward, standing*
 30 *slightly to the side of the Lenten wreath.*)
- 31 **NARRATOR:** "At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask,
 32 'Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister
 33 who hurts me? Seven?' Jesus replied, 'Seven! Hardly.
 34 Try seventy times seven' " (*Matthew 18:21-22*).
 35 (*NARRATOR puts out one candle with candle snuffer and*
 36 *leaves stage. BIBLICAL and CURRENT COUPLES follow*
 37 *after him/her.*)
- 38

Fifth Sunday of Lent
Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet

Cast of Characters:

BIBLICAL MAN

BIBLICAL WOMAN

CURRENT MAN

CURRENT WOMAN

Lenten Wreath: Two candles on the Lenten wreath are lit. The Christ candle is also lit.

1 *(Four PEOPLE are On-stage. Two are dressed in biblical*
2 *costume — simply a cloth/scarf tied around head or full*
3 *costume — two in current dress, one older and one younger in*
4 *each couple. The two BIBLICAL CHARACTERS are slightly to*
5 *the left of Center Stage. The two CURRENT CHARACTERS*
6 *are slightly to right of Center Stage. Both COUPLES appear to*
7 *be engaged in conversation but are frozen in place.*
8 *NARRATOR is standing off to the side, observing what is going*
9 *on. As the light comes up on the BIBLICAL CHARACTERS,*
10 *they begin to engage in conversation.)*

11 **BIBLICAL MAN:** Who does Jesus think he is, anyway? Mary
12 should not have used that expensive perfume to anoint
13 his feet. But Jesus defended her. He said it was a gift.
14 She has nothing anyway, and she gave him everything
15 she had. What a foolish act.

16 **BIBLICAL WOMAN:** I don't know. It sounds like an act of
17 love to me. Or maybe you don't understand that.

18 **BIBLICAL MAN:** That was uncalled for. I thought the money
19 could have been used in better ways, like helping the
20 poor. And then Jesus even said the poor would always
21 be with us.

22 **BIBLICAL WOMAN:** Maybe that's the point. You have money.
23 Why aren't you helping the poor?

24 **BIBLICAL MAN:** Oh, leave me alone. Even if I helped more,
25 there would still be poor people.

26 **BIBLICAL WOMAN:** But Jesus is with us now. Mary gave out

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- 1 of love. What gift of love are you giving?
- 2 **BIBLICAL MAN:** Maybe I'm afraid to give more. I'm afraid to
- 3 open my heart. (*Light dims on BIBLICAL COUPLE and they*
- 4 *freeze again. As light comes up on CURRENT COUPLE, they*
- 5 *begin to engage in conversation.*)
- 6 **CURRENT MAN:** I get so tired of people giving all their
- 7 money to special projects and not to the church budget.
- 8 How do they think we can survive, anyway?
- 9 **CURRENT WOMAN:** Well, it sounds like they are doing what
- 10 Scripture says — helping the homeless, the poor, the
- 11 prisoner. They are giving a gift of the heart.
- 12 **CURRENT MAN:** Come on. No matter what I give, there will
- 13 still be people that need help.
- 14 **CURRENT WOMAN:** True, but aren't we called to serve the
- 15 people that are with us right now? Aren't we to open
- 16 our hearts and our wallets to those that have less than
- 17 us?
- 18 **CURRENT MAN:** Give me a break. You know that most
- 19 people in the world have less than we do ... especially in
- 20 the United States.
- 21 **CURRENT WOMAN:** And so we have a bigger responsibility
- 22 to help. How can we close our eyes and turn away?
- 23 **CURRENT MAN:** Maybe I'm afraid to give more. I'm afraid to
- 24 open my heart. (*Light dims on CURRENT COUPLE and*
- 25 *they freeze. After several seconds, the light comes up on both*
- 26 *BIBLICAL and CURRENT COUPLES. They all look up and*
- 27 *speak in unison.*)
- 28 **BIBLICAL and CURRENT COUPLES:** We are afraid, God.
- 29 Afraid to lose what we own. Afraid to lose who we are.
- 30 Open our hearts to your love so we may serve those less
- 31 fortunate than ourselves and truly live in your
- 32 kingdom. (*Lights dim again. Both COUPLES freeze. The*
- 33 *NARRATOR comes forward, standing slightly to the side of the*
- 34 *Lenten Wreath.*)
- 35 **NARRATOR:** "Then the King will say to those on his right,
- 36 'Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what's
- 37 coming to you in this kingdom. It's been ready for you
- 38 since the world's foundation. And here's why: I was



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