

tomb, both the women who were aflame with love for him and the men, he showed the stone rolled back. Since his body had been carried away, he showed them the linen cloths in which it had been wrapped lying there alone. Then, to the women who were searching eagerly, who were confused in their minds about what they had found out about him, he showed a vision of angels who disclosed evidences of the fact that he had risen again. Thus, with the report of his resurrection already accomplished, going ahead of him, the Lord of hosts and the king of glory himself at length appeared and made clear with what great might he had overcome the death he had temporarily tasted." (From Homilies on the Gospels 2,9,25)



Weekly Reflection

FOR APRIL 4, 2021

Easter Sunday



*"As yet they did not know the scripture,
that Jesus must rise from the dead."*

One thing is certain, if Jesus had not risen from the dead and appeared to his disciples, we would never have heard of him. Nothing else could have changed sad and despairing men and women into people radiant with joy and courage. The reality of the resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives us "eyes of faith" to know him and the power of his resurrection. The greatest joy we can have is to encounter the living Lord and to know him personally. Do you celebrate the feast of Easter with joy and thanksgiving for the victory which Jesus has won for you over sin and death?

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First Reading: Acts 10: 34a, 37-43

Everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.

Responsorial Psalm 118: 1-2, 16-17, 22-23

R This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Second Reading: Colossians 3: 1-4

or 1Corinthians 5: 6b-8

Seek what is above

Gospel: John 20: 1-9

He saw and believed.

"Lord Jesus Christ, you have triumphed over the grave and you have won new life for us. Give me the eyes of faith to see you in your glory. Help me to draw near to you and to grow in the knowledge of your great love and power."

Question of the Week: *What does it take to encourage you to believe in Christ?*



Gospel

John 20: 1-9

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom 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." Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first; and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Gospel Meditation

Early Sunday morning the women went to the tomb to pay their last tribute to a dead body. The disciples thought that everything had finished in tragedy. Neither were ready to see an empty tomb and hear the angel's message, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." (Mark 16:6-7). The angel urged them to believe that Jesus had indeed risen just as he had promised. In joy then went to share the good news with the other disciples.

Is it any small wonder that it was the women, rather than the apostles, who first witnessed the empty tomb and the resurrected Lord? Isidore

of Seville, a 7th century church father comments on this: "As a woman (Eve) was first to taste death, so a woman (Mary Magdalene) was first to taste life. As a woman was prescient in the fall, so a woman was prescient in beholding the dawning of redemption, thus reversing the curse upon Eve." The first to testify to the risen Lord was a woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons.

What is the significance of the stone being rolled away? It would have taken several people to move such a stone. And besides, the sealed tomb had been guarded by soldiers! This is clearly the first sign of the resurrection. Bede, a church father from the 8th century, comments: "[The angel] rolled back the stone not to throw open a way for our Lord to come forth, but to provide evidence to people that he had already come forth. As the virgin's womb was closed, so the sepulcher was closed, yet he entered the world through her closed womb, and so he left the world through the closed sepulcher." (From Homilies on the Gospels 2,7,24) Another church father remarked: "To behold the resurrection, the stone must first be rolled away from our hearts" (Peter Chrysologus, 5th century). Do you know the joy of the resurrection?

It is significant that the disciples had to first deal with the empty tomb before they could come to grips with the fact that scripture had foretold that Jesus would die for our sins and then rise triumphant. They disbelieved until they saw the empty tomb. Bede explains why the Risen Lord revealed himself gradually to the disciples:

"Our Lord and redeemer revealed the glory of his resurrection to his disciples gradually and over a period of time, undoubtedly because so great was the virtue of the miracle that the weak hearts of mortals could not grasp [the significance of] this all at once. Thus, he had regard for the frailty of those seeking him. To those who came first to the