

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 1



REFLECT

After his resurrection, Jesus addresses the following words to the sceptical disciple, Thomas: “You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.” The resurrection of Jesus is a matter of faith: the empty tomb is a consequence of his being risen, not a proof – Mary Magdalene will later challenge the risen Jesus himself about removing the body.

The resurrection of Jesus is different from the raising of Lazarus: it is more than his being restored to life, and the appearance stories will emphasise that Jesus now lives a glorified life; the empty tomb tells us that it is the same person who was crucified who is now risen.

The Easter event is the core of our Christian faith. When we read the Gospel according to John, we find little, if any, ethical teaching: there is no Sermon on the Mount, and the one beatitude he gives is precisely that of believing without seeing. The essence of the Christian life is believing in Jesus and having a living, personal relationship with him.

At Easter, we are invited to renew our baptismal promises and to profess our faith anew. Hopefully this is the culmination of the joyful season of Lent, in which we have looked at ourselves and how we are trying to live as best we can as disciples of Jesus. May we be truly blessed as those who have not seen and yet believe. ■

WHERE IS HE? (JOHN 20:1-9)

Mary Magdalene: detail from *Deposition of the cross scene over St John of the Cross side altar* by P. Verkade (1927) in Carmelite Church in Dobling, Austria

Mary Magdalene is the constant figure in all four accounts of the events of Easter morning.

In John’s version, she finds the tomb empty and assumes that someone has moved Jesus’ body. Simon Peter and the disciple Jesus loved run to the sepulchre when she reports this: Peter seems equally bewildered, but his companion, thanks to his close relationship to Jesus, sees and believes.

The empty tomb proves nothing: all it can say is “He is not here”; it cannot provide an explanation. The statement that “He is risen” is revealed from God, either by an angelic messenger or by the risen Jesus himself. Peter is given priority in honour as the leader of the disciples by the other one, who waits to allow him to enter the tomb first: but the “Beloved Disciple”, the source of the Johannine tradition which is preserved and expressed in the Fourth Gospel, has a certain priority in belief. The links with the raising of Lazarus are clear, as are the differences: whereas Lazarus came out still wrapped in his burial shroud, the cloths which bound Jesus are lying on the ground, with the cloth over his face neatly rolled up.

The Beloved Disciple believes without seeing the risen Jesus. He may well be representing generations yet to come (including ourselves), who will have to believe without visual evidence. But we have the scriptures: it is the scriptures which reveal to us God’s plan, that Jesus must rise from the dead. ■

SAY

The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

DO

Make the Sign of the Cross with holy water: think of your baptism and what it means to you.

LEARN

Mary Magdalene is the constant figure in the tradition of the women’s visit to the tomb of Jesus on Easter morning.

St Augustine called her the “apostle of the apostles”, as she experiences the risen Jesus and goes to tell the male disciples that he is risen.

In the scene of the race to the tomb, Simon Peter is given priority in honour as the leader of the disciples; the disciple Jesus loved has priority in faith.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I have risen, and I am with you still, alleluia.
You have laid your hand upon me, alleluia.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge,
alleluia, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who on this day,
through your Only Begotten Son,
have conquered death
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your
Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Act 10:34-37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
Peter addressed Cornelius and his household:
"You must have heard about the recent
happenings in Judaea: about Jesus of
Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after
John had been preaching baptism. God had
anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with
power, and because God was with him, Jesus
went about doing good and curing all who
had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I,
and those with me, can witness to everything
he did throughout the countryside of Judaea
and in Jerusalem itself; and also to the fact
that they killed him by hanging him on a tree,
yet three days afterwards God raised him to
life and allowed him to be seen, not by the
whole people but only by certain witnesses
God had chosen beforehand. Now we are
those witnesses – we have eaten and drunk
with him after his resurrection from the
dead – and he has ordered us to proclaim
this to his people and to tell them that God
has appointed him to judge everyone, alive
or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear
this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will
have their sins forgiven through his name."
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 117

Response:

This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad.

or

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.
Let the sons of Israel say:
"His love has no end." (R.)
2. The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds. (R.)
3. The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes. (R.)

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Colossians.

Since you have been brought back to true life
with Christ, you must look for the things that
are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's
right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly
things, not on the things that are on the earth,
because you have died, and now the life you
have is hidden with Christ in God. But when
Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you
will be revealed in all your glory with him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALTERNATIVE SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

SEQUENCE

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer
sacrifice and praise.
The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
hath sinners to his Father reconciled.
Death with life contended; combat strangely
ended!
Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.
Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon
the way.
The tomb the Living did enclose;
I saw Christ's glory as he rose!
The angels there attesting;
shroud with grave-clothes resting.
Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before
you into Galilee.
That Christ is truly risen from the dead we
know.
Victorious king, thy mercy show!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed;
let us celebrate the feast then, in the Lord.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

(Alternative Gospels: Mt 28:1-10, or in the
evening: Lk 24:13-35)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

It was very early on the first day of the week
and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came
to the tomb. She saw that the stone had
been moved away from the tomb and came
running to Simon Peter and the other disciple,

the one Jesus loved. "They have taken the
Lord out of the tomb" she said "and we don't
know where they have put him."

So Peter set out with the other disciple to
go to the tomb. They ran together, but the
other disciple, running faster than Peter,
reached the tomb first; he bent down and
saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but
did not go in. Simon Peter who was following
now came up, went right into the tomb, saw
the linen cloths on the ground, and also the
cloth that had been over his head; this was
not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a
place by itself. Then the other disciple who
had reached the tomb first also went in; he
saw and he believed. Till this moment they
had failed to understand the teaching of
scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), through
the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with
Christ in Baptism, so that we may walk with
him in newness of life. And so, now that our
Lenten observance is concluded, let us renew
the promises of Holy Baptism, by which we once
renounced Satan and his works and promised to
serve God in the holy Catholic Church.

Do you renounce Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty show?

I do.

Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

I do.

And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ,
who has given new birth by water and the
Holy Spirit
and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins,
keep us by his grace,
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
for eternal life.
Amen.**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed,
alleluia;
therefore let us keep the feast with the
unleavened bread
of purity and truth, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your Church, O God,
with unfailing love and favour,
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,
she may come to the glory of the
resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.