

"John saw the empty tomb and believed"

Reading 1: Act: 10: 34, 37-43

Responsorial Psalm: 117: 1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Reading 2: Col 3: 1-4

Gospel Reading : John 20: 1-9

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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 raise from the dead.

Meditation:

What was it like for the disciple who had stood at the cross of Jesus and then laid him in a tomb on Good Friday, to come back three days later and discover that the sealed tomb was now empty? John, along with Peter, was the first apostle to reach the tomb of Jesus on Easter Sunday morning. Like Mary Magdalene and the other disciples, John was not ready to see an empty tomb and to hear the angel's message, *Why do you seek the living among the dead* (Luke 24:5)? What did John see in the tomb that led him to believe in the resurrection of Jesus? It was certainly not a dead body. The dead body of Jesus would have disproven the resurrection and made his death a tragic conclusion to a glorious career as a great teacher and miracle worker. When John saw the empty tomb he must have recalled Jesus' prophecy that he would rise again after three days. Through the gift of faith John realized that no tomb on earth could contain the Lord and giver of life. John saw and believed (John 20:8).

John had to first deal with the empty tomb before he could meet the risen Lord later that evening along with the other apostles who had locked themselves in the upper room out of fear of the Jewish authorities, John testified as an eye-witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: *What we have seen, heard, and touched we proclaim as the eternal word of life which existed from the beginning* (1 John 1:1-4). John bears witness to what has existed from all eternity. This "word of life" is Jesus the word incarnate, but also Jesus as the word announced by the prophets and Jesus the word now preached throughout the Christian church for all ages to come.

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 Christ and to know him personally as our Lord and Saviour. Do you accept the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection with sceptical doubt and disbelief or with trusting faith and joyful wonderment?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

1. When you are excited about something, who do you like to tell? Why?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose Mary Magdalene to be the first to witness His resurrection? Do you know where He is in you?
3. What causes you not to recognize Jesus during desperate situations?

"Lord Jesus Christ, you have triumphed over the grave and you have won for us new life and resurrection power. 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 for us and your great victory over sin and death."