

Easter Sunday A - B - C

*This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad. (Ps 117:24)*



First Reading

Acts 10:34.37-43

Peter addressed them: "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."

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

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 too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

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 disciples 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.

Meditation

When Christians are asked the meaning of Easter, they refer to the resurrection of Jesus. It is the day for telling the wondrous story: Mary Magdalene saw the stone moved away, Peter went in and saw the wrappings on the ground, and the beloved disciple saw and believed. The faith of contemporary believers builds on their testimony. It is our festival of life, for the boldness of God's love snatched victory from the jaws of death. Our memories and rituals unite us with that event which was so disconcerting, marvellous, and liberating.

Sunday after Sunday, and especially at this greatest Sunday of the year, we enter events which show Easter as more than a once-upon-a-time event. We bless and share a meal that shapes us as the Body of Christ. We sing alleluias and say the good news still takes flesh in our world. We colour eggs and enjoy feasts without need of a rational explanation. The pull to dress finely may be marred by commercialism or a drive for status, but we know our winter has passed and new life is here. In these and in so many other ethnic customs, we renew life just as we renew our baptismal commitment. More correctly, we rest in awe before the One who renews life and provides the possibility of commitment.

The reading from Colossians highlights still another dimension of this day. Implicit within all these celebrations, there is a sense of future. We can be intent on "things above rather than on things of earth." Easter is a promise of the end time. Our festivals take place in a sinful world, in an imperfect Church. In them we taste that time when we will all be in glory.

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Second Reading

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

The pride that you take in yourselves is hardly to your credit. You must know how even a small amount of yeast is enough to leaven all the dough. So get rid of all the old yeast, and make yourselves into a completely new batch of bread, unleavened as you are meant to be. Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed; let us celebrate the feast, then, by getting rid of all the old yeast of evil and wickedness, having only the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Gospel

John 20:1-18

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 disciples 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 disciples then went back home. But Mary was standing outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, as she wept, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, "Woman, why are you weeping?" "They have taken my Lord away," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him." As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him." Jesus said, "Mary!" She turned round then and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbuni!" – which means Master. Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." So Mary of Magdala told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that he had said these things to her.

Meditation

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