Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord (Easter Day)

Gospel text (*Jn* 20:1-9): On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

“Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed”

Mons. Joan Enric VIVES i Sicília Bishop Emeritus of Urgell
(Lleida, Spain)

Today, “is the day the LORD has made”: this is the expression of Psalm 118, 24 that we shall be singing throughout Easter time and fills out the celebration of our Christian faith. The Father has resurrected Jesus Christ, His beloved Son, in whom He delights, because He has loved to the point of giving his life for all of us.

Let us live this Easter with plenty of joy. Christ has risen: so let us celebrate it full of joy and love. Death, sin and sadness, have today been defeated by Jesus Christ… and He has opened the doors to a new life, the real life, the life we owe to the grace of the Holy Spirit. Nobody should be sad. Christ is our Peace and our Path forever and ever. Today, He “fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes 22).

The great sign the Gospel gives us today is that Jesus' tomb is empty. We have to look no more among the dead for He who is alive has risen. And his disciples also realize his tomb is empty. They will see him risen later on; experiencing him alive in a wonderful meeting in faith. An empty tomb and apparitions will

be the great signs for the believer's faith. The Gospel says: “Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed” (Jn 20:8). Through his faith he realizes that the emptiness, the burial cloths, and the cloth that had covered his head rolled up in a separate place, were all signs that God had been there, signs of the new life. Love can see signs where others cannot, and small signs are enough. “The other disciple whom Jesus loved” (Jn 20:2) was led by the love he had received from Christ.

The disciples “saw and believed”; this must also be our aim. Let us renew our paschal faith; that Christ be our Lord in everything we do. Let his Life revitalize ours and let us renew the grace of the baptism we have received; let us become his apostles and disciples; let us be guided by love and announce to all our happiness to believe in Christ; let us be hopeful witnesses of his Resurrection.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “This is what should make us measure the strength of love that inflamed the soul of this woman. The disciples went away, but she did not go away from the tomb of the Lord. So it happened that she was then alone to see him, she who remained to look for him. For it is perseverance that gives effectiveness to the good work.” (Saint Gregory the Great)

- “Jesus has not returned to a normal human life in this world like Lazarus and the others whom Jesus raised from the dead. He has entered upon a different life, a new life — the vast breadth of God himself.” (Benedict XVI)

- “The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: ‘I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve.. ’ (I Cor 15:3-4). The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus (Cf. Acts 9:3-18).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 639)

Other comments

VIGIL MASS (A) (Mt 28:1-10): «He is not here, for He is risen»

Fr. Josep Mª MASSANA i Mola OFM
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Today, in the Easter Vigil Gospel, there throbs a great dynamism: two women run towards the tomb, suddenly a violent earthquake occurs, an angel rolls the stone from the entrance, the guards tremble in fear and become like dead men. And Jesus, alive and resurrect, meets those women on the way...

Those women are the first ones to experience the resurrection of Jesus, and this, just by looking at the empty sepulcher and at the angel that tells them: «Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen as He said...» (Mt 28:5-6). They are also the first ones to bear witness of their experience: «Go at once and tell his disciples: He is risen...!» (Mt 28:7).

And they believe right away. Their faith, though, is a mixture of holy fear and great joy. They feared greatly the angel's words, announcing a message that goes far beyond all the human expectations. And they felt the joy because of the certainty of our Lord's resurrection, because the Scriptures had been fulfilled, because they had been privileged by the immense joy of experiencing that Paschal mystery. Therefore, faith, while producing a great intimate joy, does not exclude fear.

They run to announce their experience of the Resurrected, which they have felt without actually seeing him. And Jesus rewards this faith by meeting them on the way.

The core of all experience of faith, in the first place, is neither a doctrine nor any dogma. It is the person of Jesus. The faith of the two women in today's Gospel is centered in him, in his person, and in nothing more. They have experienced him alive and they run to proclaim him alive!

Another woman, St. Clare of Assisi, wrote to the St. Agnes of Prague, that she should be centered on the resurrected Jesus: «Gaze upon, examine, contemplate Jesus Christ (...). If you suffer with him, with him you will reign, grieving with him, with him you will rejoice, dying with him on the cross of tribulation, with him you will possess mansions in Heaven...».

Other comments

VIGIL MASS (B) (Mk 16:1-7): «Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified; he has been raised»

Mons. Ramon MALLA i Call Emeritus Bishop of Lleida
(Lleida, Spain)

Today, the Church celebrates with joy the main festivity: the triumph of its Head, Jesus Christ. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a reality of which we cannot have any doubt. It is not infrequent, and it is understandable, that a heavenly event, like a risen body, cannot be assimilated by our earthly means. Soon enough, though, Mary of Magdala and St. James' mother would receive straightforward evidence, later authenticated with many appearances, and carried out in such a way that excluded any suspicion of eventual hallucinations: «Don't be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified; he has been raised and is not here. This is, however, the place where they laid him» (Mk 16:6).

Above and beyond the bliss consequence of Christ's Resurrection, this occurrence also brings us the happiness of being able to rely upon a clear cut and joyful answer to man's queries: what is awaiting us at the end of life? What is the point of the suffering on earth? We cannot doubt that, after death, a new eternal life awaits us: «you will see Him there just as He told you» (Mk 16:7). St. Paul avows with great conviction: «Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over Him» (Rm 6:8-9). To the question about the end of life, the Christian logically answers with a happy expectation.

Today's Gospel emphasizes that the young man —the angel— that speaks to the women, joins the two concepts of pain and glory: He who has risen is the same one that was crucified. St. Leo de Great says: «… (The power of the Cross) the believers receive strength for weakness, glory for shame, life for death»; our everyday Cross is, therefore, the path of Resurrection.

Other comments

VIGIL MASS (C) (Lk 24:1-12) «Why look for the living among the dead? You won't find him here. He is risen»

Fr. Austin NORRIS
(Mumbai, India)

Today, we behold the glory of the Lord shining in its victory over suffering and death. New life is promised to those who search and believe the Truth of Jesus. No one will be disappointed, neither were the women «who went to the tomb with perfumes and ointments» (Lk 24,1).

The perfumes and ointments that we are to carry through our life are our life spreading the Word of God when Jesus enfleshed said: «I am the resurrection; whoever believes in me (…) shall live, [and] will never die» (Jn 11,25-26).

In the midst of our confusion and pain we seem to become myopic in vision, because we cannot look beyond our immediate environment. And the «why do you look for the living among the dead?» (Lk 24,5) is a call to follow Jesus and to search the presence of the Lord in the "here and now"; in the midst of Lord's people and their suffering and pain. In his letter for Lent the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI mentions how «salvation, in fact, is a gift, it is God's grace, but to have effect in my existence it requires my consent, an acceptance demonstrated in deeds, that is, in the will to live like Jesus, to walk after him».

«Returning from the tomb…» (Lk 24,9) of our misery and doubt and confusion, we are in turn, able to give others hope and certainty in their vale of tears. The darkness of the tomb «gives way to the bright promise of immortality» (Preface for Funeral Masses). May the glory of the Lord Jesus hold us up facing heavenwards and may we be an Easter People always. May we rise up from being a Good Friday people to an Easter people.