Tuesday in the Octave of Easter

Gospel text (*Jn* 20:11-18): Mary Magdalene stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the Body of Jesus had been. And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” She thought it was the gardener and said to him, “Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni,” which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mary went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and then reported what he had told her.

“Mary went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’”

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Today, in the figure of Mary Magdalene, we can contemplate two levels of acceptance of our Savior: the first imperfect, and the second complete. From the first, Mary reveals herself to us as a most sincere disciple of Jesus. She follows him, the incomparable teacher; she is heroically devoted to him, crucified for love. She seeks him, beyond death, buried and disappeared. How imbued with admirable devotion to her “Lord” are the two exclamations that the evangelist John preserved for us, like incomparable pearls: “They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him” (Jn 20:13); “Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him” (Jn 20:15). Few disciples in history have been as devoted and loyal as Mary Magdalene.

However, today's good news, this Tuesday of the Octave of Easter, infinitely surpasses all ethical goodness and all religious faith in an admirable, but ultimately dead, Jesus; and it takes us to the realm of faith in the Risen One. That Jesus who, at first, leaving her at the level of imperfect faith, addresses Mary Magdalene, asking her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" (Jn 20:15), and to whom she, with myopic eyes, responds as one would to a gardener who is interested in her distress; that Jesus, who now, in a

second, definitive moment, calls her by name: “Mary!” and stirs her to the point of trembling with resurrection and life, that is, with Himself, the Risen One, the Living One forever. The result? Mary Magdalene, the believer and the apostle: “Mary went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’” (John 20:18).

Today, it is not uncommon to find Christians who do not clearly see what lies beyond this life and, therefore, doubt the resurrection of Jesus. Am I among them? Similarly, there are many Christians who have enough faith to follow him privately, but who are afraid to proclaim him apostolically. Am I part of that group? If so, like Mary Magdalene, let us say to Him: “Master! Let us embrace his feet and go to find our brothers and sisters to tell them: The Lord has risen, and I have seen him.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “It is no great thing to believe that Christ died. This the pagans, Jews, and all the wicked believe; in a word, all believe that Christ died. But that He rose from the dead is the belief of Christians. To believe that He rose again, this we deem of great moment.” (Saint Augustine)

- “In Jesus’ Resurrection a new possibility of human existence is attained that affects everyone and that opens up a future, a new kind of future, for mankind.” (Benedict XVI)

- “(...) The shock provoked by the Passion was so great that at least some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection. Far from showing us a community seized by a mystical exaltation, the Gospels present us with disciples demoralized and frightened. For they had not believed the holy women returning from the tomb and had regarded their words as an ‘idle tale’ (Lk 24:11; cf. Mk 16:11,13). When Jesus reveals himself to the Eleven on Easter evening, ‘he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen’ (Mk 16:14).” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 643)