

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. 1 Cor 5:7b-8a

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed;
let us then feast with joy in the Lord.

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:1-9; L42ABC

**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 dis-
ciple 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.**

or

Mark 16:1-7; L41B in *Appendix A*, p. 292,

or, at an afternoon or evening Mass

Luke 24:13-35; L46 in *Appendix A*, p. 292.

See *Appendix A*, p. 293, for the other readings.

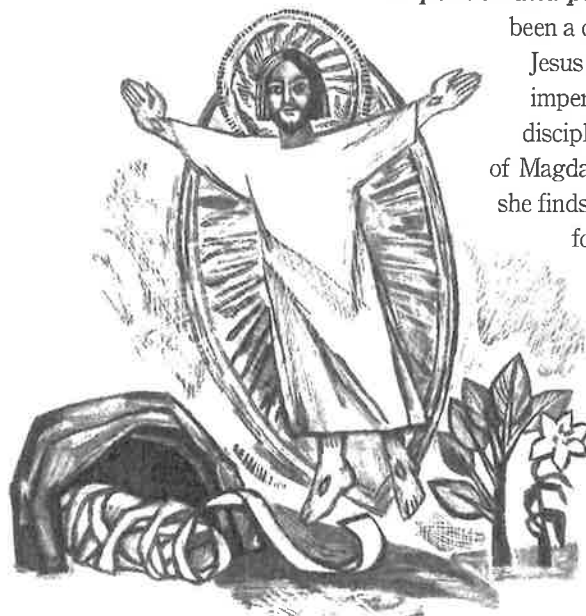
Reflecting on the Gospel and Living the Paschal Mystery

To the point: Mary of Magdala was the first to discover the empty tomb and her reaction might be described as fear and unknowing. She reported the events to Peter and the Beloved Disciple, but she misunderstood the meaning. She thought somebody had taken Jesus’ corpse. Only when the Beloved Disciple and Peter saw the empty tomb for themselves did the Beloved Disciple believe. But they still did not understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

To ponder and pray: Easter morning must have

been a confusing, even frightening, time.

Jesus had just been killed by the state, an imperial occupying power. Most of the disciples had scattered. Now when Mary of Magdala comes to pay her final respects, she finds the tomb empty. It might be hard for us to imagine, but apparently the early disciples did not understand that Jesus was to rise from the dead. Though they had been with Jesus during his earthly ministry, they were unprepared for this victorious act of God over death itself. To us, the resurrection of Jesus is a central point of faith. For them, it seems to have been wholly unexpected. The gospels are remarkably candid about this embarrassing fact.



But are we ready for God to conquer death in our lives? Or is this something wholly unexpected as well? Each of us has experienced loss, and sometimes it can be comforting to hold on to this loss. We want to visit the tomb. We remember the way things were. We see the burial garments are left in the tomb, as a symbol of a past that is no longer present. The disciples will never experience Jesus in the same way. His earthly ministry is over. Something new is in store and it is something wholly unexpected. With respect to our own personal losses, those moments will never be the same. God will bring something new, wholly unexpected from those crises.

In this as in the other gospel accounts, the first indications of Jesus’ resurrection were the discovery of the empty tomb. The appearances of the risen Jesus came later. Initially the women discovered the tomb empty, pondered its meaning, and reported to the remaining disciples. Only the Beloved Disciple, likely the “eyewitness” behind the Fourth Gospel, was one who believed upon finding the tomb empty. No other disciple did. But for most disciples, the empty tomb was not enough. Thus the risen Jesus appears.

We see similar movements of faith in our own lives. We find our own empty tombs, signifiers of something greater. But often we do not grasp the full meaning until later, until something equivalent to a resurrection appearance. Let us be attentive to the empty tomb signs and experiences in our lives that leave us pondering, wondering how God is acting in the world. It could be that we will experience a resurrection, new life from death, meaning from loss.

Model Penitential Act

Presider: On this Easter morning, God raises us up from the tombs of our sins and failings. In the risen Christ, we are recreated in the love of God. And so, with humility and joy, let us begin our Easter Eucharist by asking God's forgiveness and peace. *[pause]*

Risen Lord, the Anointed One of God: Lord, have mercy.

Risen Lord, the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for us: Christ, have mercy.

Risen Lord, the cornerstone of God's kingdom: Lord, have mercy.

Model Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

Presider: "This is the day the Lord has made." In the gladness of this Easter day, let us pray.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For our church and parish family, that all our ministries may proclaim the good news of the empty tomb . . .

For the nations and peoples of the world, that the peace and mercy of God may reign throughout the earth . . .

For the sick and dying, the suffering and imprisoned, the addicted and despairing, that the victorious Christ may break the chains of their suffering and pain . . .

For all who have been baptized and welcomed into our church this Easter, that they may walk anew in the light of the risen One . . .

For our deceased brothers and sisters *[especially . . .]*, that God may raise them up to the new life of his risen Son:

Presider: Father of life, Author of love, in raising your Son from the grave, all of creation has been reborn. May the life and love manifested in the paschal mystery be a constant and lasting reality in our lives. We ask this through Christ, our risen Lord. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

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.**

FOR REFLECTION

- Where is the risen Lord present among us? How is the good news of the risen One proclaimed in the faithfulness and compassionate charity of people in your life?
- When have you seen seemingly misplaced compassion, forgiveness, or reconciliation "vindicated"?

Homily Points

- Easter calls us out of the darkness that shrouds our lives into the light of possibility, of healing, of re-creation. In his rising from the dead, Christ enables us to bring into our own lives all that he taught and lived throughout his life: the love, compassion, generosity, humility, and selflessness that ultimately triumphs over hatred, bigotry, prejudice, despair, greed, and death.
- We sometimes find ourselves stuck in a Good Friday world: our problems batter us, overwhelm us, strain our ability to cope and make it all work. But in raising his Son from the dead, God vindicates the Gospel of his Christ: that good conquers evil, that love transforms hatred, that light shatters the darkness. Our lives are filled with experiences of resurrection, when the despair and desperation of our Good Fridays are transformed into Easter hope by the compassion and mercy of those who have embraced the good news of Easter morning.