

Sat: 3rd April Easter Vigil

Lk 24, 1-12

On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, the women went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on entering discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, "Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here, he has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man had to be handed over into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?" And they remembered his words...



The women went to tomb, expecting to anoint the body of Jesus. They did not go with any expectation of the Resurrection.

Imagined their shock when they saw that the stone was rolled away... imagine their terror when they saw

two men in brilliant clothes appearing at their side. What was happening? In reverence awe, they bowed down to the unexpected heavenly sight. The angels told them, "Why do you look among the dead for someone who is alive?" Yes! This is our message today too! Jesus is alive. He is not dead! Note that it is in the PRESENT TENSE! He is not in the past or the future... he is in our present. Here and Now, he lives with us, he is with us. This is our Good News! This is our Easter Joy! That is why we can say 'Alleluia!' because we rejoice in our God who IS alive.

As Easter people, we should not be stuck in our past events... or troubled by our future worries. Instead, we are called to be people who are alive today, here and now.

Jesus, I thank you for the gift of your Life. You are a God who is alive here... now... always. I am called to be alive... enjoying your presence with me each moment.

Easter Sunday

Sun: 4th April

Jn 20, 1-9

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary 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 disciple 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 rolled 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 the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

There is extreme care to describe the cloth that had been rolled over Jesus' head was neatly rolled up in a place by itself. This brings to mind a picture of calmness... As though Jesus resurrected and even peacefully rolled up the cloth used to wrap his head. "There were no traces of haste. The deserted tomb bore the marks of perfect calm" (Westcott)

No haste! Why do we always rush around like crazy people? Why our actions, movements, words can't bore the marks of perfect calm? Calmness does not mean slowness but is a result from a heart that knows that God is in total control of the everyday happenings, the situations, the problems, etc. When the Beloved Disciple saw... he believed. Believed? How can he believe when the next sentence it states that they failed to understand the teaching of the scripture? What kind of faith is this? This is a faith that is based on openness to God. The beloved Disciple saw the empty tomb... and knew somehow that God had a part in all that had happened. He knew that it was not robbers that came and stole the body or that Jesus had somehow revived and struggled out of the clothes. The beloved Disciple had the faith to see the hand of God in this mysterious drama. He did not fully understand but he believed.

Applying to our lives... we might not fully understand the 'whys' of our sufferings or problems. However, how great if we have the faith of the Beloved Disciple to believe that God is with us and he has a part in our personal dramas. Can we trust without fully understanding? Can we rejoice at the ways of God even when we cannot grasp and understand fully his ways?

Mon: 5th April Easter Monday

Mt 28, 8-15

Filled with awe and great joy the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples. And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said, And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee, they will see me there.' While they were on their way, some of the guard went off into the city to tell the chief priests all that had happened. These held a meeting with the elders and, after some

discussion, handed a considerable sum of money to the soldiers with these instructions, 'This is what you must say, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep." And should the governor come to hear this, we undertake to put things right with him ourselves...'

Two stories being circulated. The testimony of the women who were told by Jesus to go and tell the Good News of the Resurrection to his disciples vs. the lie of the Jewish authorities and soldiers regarding the stolen body of Jesus. Which one would we choose to be part of- the Truth or the Lie?

Our choice is reflected in our everyday life. If we choose to be at the side of the Truth, we would live each day witnessing to the world that Jesus is alive... that we have a God whose love is stronger than death. If we choose to be in the side of the lie, then we will live a life as an anti-witness to Christ's resurrection.

The truth and the lie- which one will we want to be part of?

Let us, like the women in the passage, be filled with great joy at the Good News of the Resurrection. Today, Jesus meets us again... What is the Good News that he has for us? Do we want to live reflecting the Truth of His Resurrection?

Jesus, I want to be at the side of the Truth. Give me the faith to express my choice with my words, actions, options...

Tue: 6th April

Holy Tuesday Jn 20, 11-18



Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, 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 around and saw Jesus standing there, though

she did not recognise him. Jesus said, '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 knew him 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 and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father, to my God and your God.' So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

Mary was in deep grief. She thought that the body of Jesus was missing and so she was totally focussed on this fact. She was so much in focussing in the missing body of Jesus that she seemed not to express any fear at the appearance of the two angels or to recognise Jesus when he appeared to her. How much can we learn from this humble woman- the real disciple of Jesus? Many times, our focus is in our work, money, latest gadgets,... in pleasures, greed, selfishness, pride, etc. that we do not bother to focus on Jesus. Mary was concerned with the question: Where is my Lord?

We, on the other hand, are more concerned with: Where is my money? Where is my job leading me? Where is the...? Do we focus on where our journey of faith is going? Do we focus on where is Jesus in our daily life? Jesus comes to us... Do we have faith enough to recognise him? Our Easter Faith demands that we go out and share the Good News to our brothers and sisters. We are called to be his messengers so that many people will come to see and know the Lord. Who can we share this Good News with?

Wed: 7th April Easter Wed Lk 24, 13-35

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth,' they said... Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets!...' Then starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself... And their eyes were opened... 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures with us?'

Isn't it normal when we are depressed and negative about certain things, and start to talk to someone, and that someone is also negative and pessimistic, we end up feeling even worse than before? The two disciples of Jesus were disappointed and disillusioned about the whole event. The more they talked, the more downcast they were. Jesus entered into their conversation. He opened their mind to what the scriptures meant and how to interpret all the events that had happened. The more Jesus spoke to them, the more their hearts started to glow to hope and joy.

This is what prayer does to us. When we are bothered with something... Jesus comes to us and opens our minds so that we can see things from different point of view- from his point of view. The words of Jesus, once we are opened to him, will always be like a fire burning within us. *Jesus, walk with me each day. Speak to me so that my heart will burn deep with joy, peace. Give me your Word!*

Thu: 8th April Easter Thu Lk 24, 35-48

...Jesus stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you!' In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, 'Why are you so agitated and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have.' And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they were dumbfounded; so he said to them, 'Have you anything to eat?' And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes...

The disciples found it really difficult to swallow the reality of resurrection. After hearing the accounts of those who witnessed the resurrection, they were still alarmed and frightened when Jesus appeared and said, 'Peace be with you!' Perhaps, today we cannot imagine the fear of the disciples. For many of us, the resurrection of Jesus does not really make any difference in our lives. We fail to be amazed at this time of celebration because Easter is just a season we go through each year. Believe! Understand and enjoy that Jesus' resurrection is real! Jesus is alive!



Jesus says to each of us today 'PEACE BE WITH YOU'...we might not be afraid with the same fear of the disciples. But in our concrete fears...be it about money problem, uncertainties of our future, fear of growing old and alone... Jesus wants to give us his Peace. His peace is not a cemetery peace where there is no problem or tension. Rather, he wants to share with us his peace that comes from this certainty that God is with us and that he takes care of us...that he walks with us. Because he is with us, problems and hard situations do not overwhelm us. Nothing and nobody can take this peace from us.

Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of your Life. Help me to enjoy this Peace that you share with me.

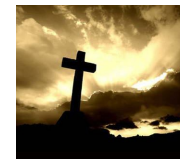
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Prayer for Living

Fri: 2nd April Good Friday Jn 18, 1-19;42

.... Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then to the disciple he said, "This is your mother" And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home. After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfill the scripture perfectly he said: "I am thirsty." A jar of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said, "It is accomplished," and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.



In his whole lifetime, Jesus gave the best wine to the people, as we see at the wedding of Cana in John 2. Yet, at his moment of desperate thirst, he was given cheap vinegar to drink. Today, as we celebrate Good Friday and as we contemplate Jesus on the cross, we listen once more to his cry, 'I am thirsty' Jesus, our Master and Teacher, our King and Leader, gives his very best to us...gives himself to us because of Love. Do we offer him our cheap vinegar to him? Do we give to him our best... Our time to pray and be with him, our life to do his work here, our energy and youth to serve him, our voice to proclaim his message?

Contemplate Jesus on the cross... let him embrace us with his love and be amazed at his self-giving. Mary his mother, John his beloved friend and some women were sitting faithfully at the foot of his cross. The rest of his disciples ran away out of fear. We too might, in moments, ran away from Jesus, for e.g. when we perhaps feel lazy to be with him in prayer, when we wallow in self-pity and refuse to appreciate all the gifts that Jesus has given us, when we become absorbed in the values of this world, etc. In moments like these, we, like Peter and the rest of the disciples, are placing ourselves above Jesus. In moments like these, Jesus *silently cries out to us, 'Where are you?'*