



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**Easter Sunday of the Resurrection.
April 20th 2025**

Theme: "...and he saw and believed."

Gathering Prayer

All: 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.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: John 20:1-9

¹ 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 ² 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.'
³ So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. ⁴ They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; ⁵ he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. ⁶ Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, ⁷ 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. ⁸ Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. ⁹ Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Gospel Focus

So much of our Easter gospels will be about seeing in the gospel, they only see hints of Jesus' restored life; they do not yet encounter the risen Christ. Throughout the Easter season, Christ will reveal more and more, letting them see the truth of the resurrection and then preparing them for his ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. All this seeing is important because these followers are to turn into witnesses, people who have seen something and testify to it so that others can benefit.

Gospel Reflection

Everything depends on Easter morning. Is the tomb empty or is it not? As Christians we believe that on this holiest of days, Jesus Christ, Son of God, rose to new life. We often take this truth for granted, but it was not a guarantee for the apostles that Sunday

morning. The news of the empty tomb would change their lives such that they could not help but share the good news of Christ.

Mary Magdalene takes center stage in the gospel reading today, as "Apostle to the Apostles," the one with the privilege of sharing the resurrection with the disciples. Mary has been around since the beginning. Since Jesus released her from seven demons (see Luke 8:2), she followed him all the way to his end. Visiting the tomb before dawn, she finds the stone rolled away. She does not yet know what she has seen, but she knows she has seen something. Even someone as faithful as Mary could not yet know that he had risen from the dead. How could she not assume that someone has taken his body? Seeing this, she runs back to Simon Peter with the news. Returning to the tomb, they find Jesus' burial garment neatly folded up, a clear sign that this was not just some chance robbery. However, they still have not pieced together the truth revealed in the Scriptures, even though the disciples "believed."

Although Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene a few short verses later, she does not recognize him at first, mistaking him for the gardener. Recognizing God in our midst can be a challenge. Even when we trust in God's promises, our hope can be obscured by suffering, by selfishness, by anger, or by fear. God's action can surprise or startle us, just as the apostles were shocked when they received unexpected news on Easter. It is easier to see what God does than to understand why He does it. Emerging from the gloominess of Lent and the desolation of Good Friday, can we begin to recognize God present in our midst? Can we accept the invitation of Jesus to live in the joy of the resurrection?

If we accept this offer, if we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, then, as St Paul says, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! (1Cor 9:16). Like Mary Magdalene, like Peter and the beloved disciple, when we encounter the risen Jesus, we are called to proclaim the gospel, the good news. The resurrection of Christ at Easter is a message that must be broadcast through all space and time. Easter is the final triumph of life over death, of love over evil, of God's kingdom over tyranny and oppression, That is good news the world needs to hear. Do we live as if Christ has truly risen from the dead? Are we willing to share this good news with others, like Peter does in our first reading? Like Paul does in his letters? God has already won our salvation, our freedom in Christ Jesus our Lord. What else is there for us to do than to share this gospel with all we encounter?

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Acts 10:34, 37-43

³⁴ And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, ... ³⁷ the word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses to all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Responsorial Reading — Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

R: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad. (R)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Let the house of Israel say, "His mercy endures forever." **(R)**

"The right hand of the Lord has struck with power; the right hand of the Lord is exalted. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." **(R)**

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the Lord has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes. **(R)**

Second Reading — Colossians 3:1-4

¹ If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

515. The Gospels were written by men who were among the first to have the faith (Cf. Mk 1:1; Jn 21:24) and wanted to share it with others. Having known in faith who Jesus is, they could see and make others see the traces of his mystery in all his earthly life. From the swaddling clothes of his birth to the vinegar of his Passion and the shroud of his Resurrection, everything in Jesus' life was a sign of his mystery. (Cf. Lk 2:7; Mt 27:48; Jn 20:7) His deeds, miracles and words all revealed that "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." (Col 2:9) His humanity appeared as "sacrament", that is, the sign and instrument, of his divinity and of the salvation he brings: what was visible in his earthly life leads to the invisible mystery of his divine sonship and redemptive mission.

640. "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." (Lk 24:5-6) The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. In itself it is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from the tomb could be explained otherwise. (Cf. Jn 20:13; Mt 28:11-15) Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women, and then with Peter. (Cf. Lk 24:3, 12, 22-23) The disciple "whom Jesus loved" affirmed that when he entered the empty tomb and discovered "the linen cloths lying there", "he saw and believed". (Jn 20:2, 6, 8) This suggests that he realized from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus. (Cf. Jn 11:44; 20:5-7)

2174. Jesus rose from the dead "on the first day of the week." (Cf. Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1) Because it is the "first day," the day of Christ's Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the "eighth day" following the sabbath, (Cf. Mk 16:1; Mt 28:1) it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ's Resurrection. For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord's Day (*he kuriake hemera, dies dominica*) Sunday:

We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on

this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead.(St. Justin, I Apol. 67: PG 6, 429 and 432)

Sharing and Discussion

1. "Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed." Would you have responded in this way? Why?
2. What is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus for you? How has it changed your life?
3. Peter said in the 1st reading, "42 And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead." Like the apostles, we too are called to preach and testify, How should we respond to this preaching?

Closing Prayer

All: O God, the glorious resurrection of your Son has obtained life everlasting for us. We offer our thankful praises, as we place our hope in you. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.