



## SUNDAY GOSPEL

### *Joy in the Risen Lord*

*John 20:1-9*

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen



wrappings lying there, but he did not go in.

Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the

linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ■

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

*Fr Mark De Battista*

The gospels do not record any direct accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, they record for us a whole series of circumstances which indicate an empty tomb, linen cloths, angels and mystery all of which provides plenty of scope for faith and the gradual realisation of the resurrection from the dead. St John’s account is no different. St Mary of Magdala sees the stone rolled away and immediately runs away from the tomb to Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved. St Peter and the disciple receive the message and set out running back

to the tomb. The empty tomb is capable of both impelling witnesses into mission as well as attracting curiosity.

St John the evangelist spends a great deal of time in creating the effect of ‘busyness’ between the two disciples running together. This is an effect which Greek scholars call ‘aspect’. It is a stylistic use of language in order to create a dramatic effect of movement between the characters involved in order to highlight the relationship between them. The overall effect is the sense of urgency to approach the empty tomb.

The linen cloths are recognised by both disciples, as is the face cloth rolled up in a place by itself. Yet only the beloved disciple recognises its significance and this leads him to faith in the resurrection. There is an ancient Jewish table ritual which tells that if a person has not finished from table, then he folds up the mouth cloth in order to indicate that he will return. Perhaps, this facecloth rolled up in a place by itself was Our Lord’s own way saying that “I will return”?? The disciple Jesus loved knew him better than the rest. “He saw and he believed...” ■

## A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

Happy Easter! “Cristòs anèsti! — Alethòs anèsti!” “Christ is risen! — He is risen indeed!”. He is among us. This week we can continue to exchange Easter greetings, as though it were one single day. It is the great day which the Lord has made.

The dominant sentiment that shines forth from the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection is joy full of wonder, but a great wonder! Joy that comes from within! And in the Liturgy we relive the state of mind of the disciples over the news which the women had brought: Jesus is Risen! We have seen him!

Let us allow this experience which is inscribed in the Gospel also to be imprinted in our hearts and shine forth from our lives. Let us allow the joyous wonder of Easter Sunday to shine forth in our thoughts, glances, behaviour, gestures and words.... If

only we were so luminous! But this is not just cosmetic! It comes from within, from a heart immersed in the source of this joy, like that of Mary Magdalene, who wept over the loss of her Lord and could hardly believe her eyes seeing him Risen.

Whoever experiences this becomes a witness of the Resurrection, for in a certain sense he himself has risen, she herself has risen. He or she is then capable of carrying a “ray” of light of the Risen One into various situations: to those that are happy, making them more beautiful by preserving them from egoism; to those that are painful, bringing serenity and hope.

Over the course of this week it will do us good to take up the Book of the Gospel and read those chapters which speak about Jesus’ Resurrection. It will really do us good! To take up the Book, look for

the chapter and read it. It will also benefit us this week to think about the joy of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Just as her pain was intimate enough to pierce her soul, so too her joy was also intimate and deep, and the disciples were able to draw from it. Having passed through the experience of the death and Resurrection of her Son, seen in faith as the supreme expression of God’s love, Mary’s heart became a font of peace, consolation, hope and mercy. All of the prerogatives of our Mother derive from this, from her participation Jesus’ Paschal Mystery. From Friday until Sunday morning she did not lose hope: we contemplated the sorrowful Mother but, at the same time, the Mother full of hope. She, who is the Mother of all of the disciples, the Mother of the Church, is the Mother of hope. ■

### TALKING POINTS

1. Fr Mark highlights the urgency of the disciples in approaching the empty tomb of Jesus. For us, seeking to know Jesus more (particularly in this Lenten/Easter season), how can we live our faith with ‘urgency’?
2. Pope Francis tells us that the Gospel of the risen Christ can be imprinted in our hearts and shine forth from our lives. We are “capable of carrying a ray of light of the Risen One into various situations”. In an increasingly secular society, it can be challenging to be Christian “out loud”. Is this still possible? How can we do it more effectively?

### PRAYER POINTS

**Pray for each other:** Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

**Reflect:** Mary, the model disciple, shows us that in order to fully celebrate with the risen Christ, we must first walk with Him in the passion. Take some time prayerfully meditating on the events of the Triduum, Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, and asking God to reveal to your heart the love of Jesus in each of these moments.

**Response:** “*Christ is risen! — He is risen indeed!*”

**Closing Prayer:**

Dying, you destroyed our death  
Rising, you restored our life  
Lord Jesus, come in glory

Amen.

