

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

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 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 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 scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

HOMILY OF POPE LEO XIV

5 April 2026

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today all of creation is resplendent with new light, a song of praise rises from the earth, and our hearts rejoice: Christ is risen from the dead, and with him, we too rise to new life!

This Easter proclamation embraces the mystery of our lives and the destiny of history, reaching us even in the depths of death, where we feel threatened and sometimes overwhelmed. It opens us up to a hope that never fails, to a light that never fades, to a fullness of joy that nothing can take away: death has been conquered forever; death no longer has power over us!

This is a message that is not always easy to accept, a promise that we struggle to embrace, because the power of death constantly threatens us, both from within and without.

From within, this power threatens us when the weight of our sins prevents us from "spreading our wings" and taking flight, or when the disappointments or loneliness we experience drain our hope. It likewise looms over us when our worries or our resentments suffocate the joy of living, when we are sad or tired, or when we feel betrayed or rejected. When we have to come to terms with our weakness, with the sufferings and the daily grind of life, we can feel as if we have ended up in a tunnel with no end in sight.

From without, death is always lurking. We see it present in injustices, in partisan selfishness, in the oppression of the poor, in the lack of attention given to the most vulnerable. We see it in violence, in the wounds of the world, in the cry of pain that rises from every corner because of the abuses that crush the weakest among us, because of the idolatry of profit that plunders the earth's resources, because of the violence of war that kills and destroys.

In this reality, the Passover of the Lord invites us to lift our gaze and open our hearts. It continues to nourish the seed of the promised victory within our spirit and throughout the course of history. It sets us in motion, like Mary Magdalene and the Apostles, so that we may discover that Jesus' tomb is empty, and therefore in every death we experience there is also room for new life to arise. The Lord is alive and remains with us. Through the cracks of resurrection that open up in the darkness, he entrusts our hearts to the hope that sustains us: the power of death is not the final destiny of our lives. We are all directed, once and for all, on the path to fulfilment, because in Christ we also have risen.

With heartfelt words, Pope Francis reminded us of this in his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, affirming that the resurrection of Christ "is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. Often it seems that God does not exist: all around

us we see persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. But it is also true that in the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit” (n. 276).

Brothers and sisters, Easter gives us this hope, as we remember that in the risen Christ a new creation is possible every day. This is what today’s Gospel tells us, as it clearly describes the event of the resurrection as taking place on “the first day of the week” (Jn 20:1). The day of Christ’s resurrection thus takes us back to that first day when God created the world, and at the same time proclaims that a new life, stronger than death, is now dawning for humanity.

Easter is the new creation brought about by the Risen Lord; it is a new beginning; it is life finally made eternal by God’s victory over the ancient enemy.

We need this song of hope today. It is ourselves, risen with Christ, who must bring him into the streets of the world. Let us then run like Mary Madgalene, announcing him to everyone, living out the joy of the resurrection, so that wherever the specter of death still lingers, the light of life may shine.

May Christ, our Passover, bless us and give his peace to the whole world!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/Homily?



Head: What do you notice about how the beloved disciple comes to believe at the tomb, and what seems to lead him to that moment?



Heart: The disciples arrive at the tomb in confusion, grief, and uncertainty. Where in your life are you still “standing at the tomb,” struggling to see what God is doing or to trust that something new is possible?



Hands: The disciples do not remain at the tomb; they begin to move, to witness, to live differently. What is one concrete way you can live this week as someone who believes that Christ is alive?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.