

REFLECTION ON THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The Entombment And Resurrection Of Jesus

Jesus has been crucified, nailed to the wood of the cross with one robber on His left and one on His right. He was being executed as a common criminal. We know from the Gospel of Mark that:

There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome. These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There were also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem. (Mark 15:40-41)

Jesus said to them:

Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

As he hung on the Cross suffering for our sins he said:

“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.”

Around 12 noon, darkness fell over the whole land until 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Having suffered excruciating pain for more than three hours, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*” which is translated, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Mark 15:33) Jesus then cried again, “*It is finished.*” (John 19:30) “*Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.*” Then He bowed His head and died. (Luke 23:46)

Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden

a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by. (John 19:38-42)

It was already evening and it was the day of preparation, the day before the Sabbath. On the Sabbath Day they rested in accordance with the Commandment. And when the Sabbath had passed, on the first day of the week:

Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back; it was very large. On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. (Mark 16:1-6)

Then they remembered Jesus' third prediction of His passion:

The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him, spit upon him, scourge him, and put him to death, but after three days he will rise." (Mark 10:33-34)

They returned from the tomb and told the disciples and Peter, as they were ordered by the angel.

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple 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. Then the disciples returned home. (John 20:3-10)

REFLECTION

We have just heard the account from Scripture of the tender loving efforts of some of the followers of Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, Mary Magdalene and the other women that had been accompanying Jesus, in their manner of laying the body of Jesus in an appropriate tomb.

Before His death, the very last words of Jesus announced to the Father that the mission He had been given for the restoration of mankind to the graces of God, to the filial relationship of sons and daughters to the Father, to the attainment of becoming heirs to the heavenly kingdom, has now been accomplished by His suffering and death.

“It is finished; and into your hands, O Almighty Father, I commend my spirit.”

Imagine the risen Christ saying triumphantly to His Father, “I was born into the temporal world, O Eternal Father, to do your will, that they may be one with us. I have fulfilled your will. My mission is complete.”

The Apostles, except for John, who was with Jesus’ mother and the other women who had accompanied Jesus, fled from the scene of Jesus’ trial and crucifixion for fear of their own lives. Even more so out of a dissipation of will and spirit; to them, all hope was lost. They thought that the Master to whom they were attached was defeated and conquered by the action of selfish and evil men. Those three years of enlightenment, joy and inspiration were all for naught.

Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb weeping and two angels said to her:

“Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are

you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and what he told her. (Jn. 20:13-18)

It was not until Mary Magdalene, who had experienced the empty tomb and believed the words of an angel within the tomb, that the Disciples came to remember and understand what Jesus had told them; "That the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day."

The truth of Jesus' resurrection is the light upon which our Christian faith is based. The resurrection makes credible everything Jesus taught and did. It is the culmination of God's eternal plan for our salvation.

The resurrection was decisive proof of the Messianic divinity of Jesus and the supreme manifestation of His divine Sonship.

St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians wrote, *"If Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty, too, your faith."*

In a homily in the 6th century, Pope St. Gregory spoke of the resurrection of Jesus, on how the holy women, Mary Magdalene and the others, had come to the tomb bringing sweet spices. They had loved Jesus in life, so that even in death they would serve Him with all care and tenderness. So it behooves us to hear what was done then, that we may consider what we have to do now by way of imitation. Pope St. Gregory further states, "For we who believe in Him, should seek the Lord bearing with us the perfume of the virtues, together with the repute of good works that we do, and come to His tomb bringing sweet spices."

In the resurrection, the Father glorifies the Son by raising Him up from the dead as the firstborn to be raised to the Father. The Son in turn glorifies the Father by imparting His own glory to those whom the Father has given Him; that is, we, His followers, the sons of Abraham.

Easter is the Feast of Light. Christ is that light and calls us, His disciples, as the light of the world. Just as a light is not placed under a bushel basket, as related in the Gospel parable (Matt 5:15) we need the Holy Spirit to remove all our bushel baskets so as we can be witnesses for the risen Christ. We need to renew the vows we made at our Baptism, or the vows made for us by our parents, and use the graces we received from the Holy Spirit to reflect on and deepen those promises. Let our risen light shine. By faith, let us live our baptism and be witnesses for the Risen Christ. Alleluia!! He is Risen.

PRAYER

We thank you, Father, for showing us the way in sending us a Savior. We thank you, Father, for the Way, the Truth, and the Life crucified for our sins. We thank you, Father, for eternal life, made possible by the willing Sacrifice of your Son.

Jesus, You brought us the Good News of salvation. You prepared the way and earned our redemption. All praise and honor to you our Redeemer.

Jesus, your words are truth and life. Give us the grace to follow them instead of our worldly desires. Help us to better recognize that our joy comes from our acceptance and adherence to your truth.

I adore you and I love you, Jesus, my God, my Savior, for my salvation and that of all mankind. You were so cruelly nailed to the Cross, and you hung there for three long hours in bitter agony while evil gloated unaware of God's saving plan of our redemption.

Jesus, You came as our Savior, offering us total redemption through your agony, passion, scourging, and crowning with thorns. All praise and thanksgiving to God for your Incarnation as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Amen!