

Easter Sunday 2023 SML

JN 20:1-9

In the history of the world, only one tomb:

- ✓ had a rock rolled before it,
- ✓ a guard set to watch it,
- ✓ to prevent the dead man from rising within it.

That was the tomb of Christ on the evening of the Friday called Good. What spectacle could be more ridiculous than armed soldiers keeping their eyes on a corpse?

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery is guarded 24/7, not because we expect the Unknown Soldier to rise from the dead, but to honor our military heroes who gave their lives for this great nation.

But at the tomb of Our Crucified Lord,

- ✓ the sentinels were set, lest
- ✓ the Dead walk,
- ✓ the Silent speak,
- ✓ the Pierced Heart quicken to beat again.

- ✓ They said He was dead.
- ✓ They knew He was dead.
- ✓ They openly called Him a Deceiver.

Yet they watched - because paradoxically, the enemies of Jesus remembered that He said in three days He would rise from the dead. The believers of Jesus made no such recollection.

Despite the many times Our Lord spoke about His death and His resurrection, the Apostles, as well as the women, remembered more that He spoke about His death than His resurrection. So when the stone was rolled to the door of the sepulcher, not only was Christ buried, but so were their hopes and dreams. Once He died and was buried, it seemed as if their lives would never change. Their persecution under the Romans would continue and Jesus died in vain.

The concern of the women would be ordinary, the day-to-day obligations of the law. Several women could be seen in the early morning light that ended the Sabbath as making their way to the tomb.

Their first concern was practical enough. Noted by Mark and Luke, they needed to anoint the body. Having died on Friday afternoon at 3:00 p.m., the women needed to wait for the guards and the crowds to go away. Joseph of Arimathea needed to ask for Pilate's permission to take the body. The body needed to be wrapped in clean linen shroud and carried

to the tomb. And all of this needed to be done before sundown and the beginning of the Sabbath. Since there was no time to anoint the body before the Sabbath, the women needed to anoint the body after the Sabbath. The very fact these women brought spices to the tomb proved they did not expect a Resurrection.

Their second concern was just as practical. “Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”

Yet when they reached the tomb, they saw the stone had been rolled back. It’s not that they could have gone to the wrong tomb. Matthew, Mark and Luke make certain of that. All three tell their readers:

- ✓ The women saw Him die;
- ✓ They saw where He was buried;
- ✓ And they returned Sunday morning.

So it’s not that they went to the wrong grave.

In addition:

- ✓ the angel in Matthew,
- ✓ the young man in Mark,
- ✓ and the two men in Luke,

testified they were at the right tomb. “I know that you seek Jesus the crucified. He is not here. He is raised from the dead.”

Finally, their being:

- ✓ “fearful yet overjoyed,” says Matthew,
- ✓ “trembling and astonished,” says Mark,
- ✓ “frightened and bowing,” says Luke,

testified they did not expect a Resurrection. Their hopes and dreams were buried with Our Blessed Lord, and they did not expect their lives to change.

The proclamation was made to Mary Magdalene, a fallen woman – who had been released from seven demons of sin.

And the fallen woman was to tell the disciples,

- ✓ who all forsook him and fled in the garden,
- ✓ and to Peter, who tempted Jesus from the cross at Caesarea Philippi,
- ✓ who became vehement with our Lord on the way to Gethsemane,
- ✓ who denied Him three times by the fire.

The glad news of the Resurrection was given:

- ✓ to a woman who had fallen
- ✓ to an Apostle who had denied;
- ✓ both of whom had repented –
- ✓ both of whom expected that once He died, and was buried, their lives would never change.

Within a few verses of where tonight's (this morning's) gospel left off, two things happened. Peter:

- ✓ returned home,
- ✓ still discouraged,
- ✓ still beaten,
- ✓ still tense,
- ✓ still frightened.

The Magdalene, on the other hand, stayed behind and witnessed Christ resurrected.

St. Mary of the Lakes celebrated a very beautiful Triduum. On Holy Thursday night, we:

- ✓ celebrated the Mass of the Lord's Supper
- ✓ reenacted the Gospel and the washing of feet
- ✓ received Holy Communion in Memory of Him
- ✓ all the altar servers processed with the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar of Repose, adorned with dozens of beautiful roses.
- ✓ A number of parishioners stayed until Midnight and kept watch with Our Blessed Lord.

Most solemnly we commemorated the passion and death of the Lord on Good Friday. With:

- ✓ the prostration of the priest,
- ✓ the reading of John's Passion,

- ✓ the veneration of the cross,
- ✓ and received Holy Communion in Memory of Him
- ✓ and we left the Church in silence.

Tonight (last night):

- ✓ in darkness we lit the Easter fire,
- ✓ worshipped Christ our Light at the singing of the Exsultet,
- ✓ listened to the events of salvation history as recorded in the scriptures,
- ✓ and we will/celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation with our Elect,
- ✓ And receive/d Holy Communion in Memory of Him.

The Triduum, the three most sacred days of the Church year

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Why do we do this? We know how the story ends. The Resurrection was certainly a sideswipe for the Apostles and the Women, but not for us. Ten years minus 2000, the Resurrection is not a sideswipe.

We celebrate the Triduum to remind us. The Triduum is a three-day reminder, not a sticky-note on the front door of the frig. Every one of us has Good Friday crosses:

- ✓ that we carried,
- ✓ are carrying,
- ✓ or will carry some day.

Every one of us. This Triduum is a three day reminder that every Good Friday is followed by an Easter Sunday.

Every one of us is faced with death that packs a punch, as I said on Good Friday, for believer and unbeliever alike. I buried:

- ✓ my Mother,
- ✓ my Dad,
- ✓ my Wife,
- ✓ my Husband,
- ✓ my Child.

The Triduum reminds all of us that we buried Christ. We buried God. Yet this Triduum reminds us that every Good Friday is followed by an Easter Sunday.

So, I am grateful to experience all that was celebrated in this Church since Thursday night and be reminded. If I were just going through the motions of the Triduum, I'd be like Peter, who did not know Christ is risen, and:

- ✓ return home,
- ✓ still discouraged,
- ✓ still beaten,
- ✓ still tense,
- ✓ still frightened.

But I prefer to be like Magdalene, who knew of the Resurrection, and be reminded this Triduum, that because of His resurrection, I am different and so are you. And no matter how many Good Fridays there:

- ✓ were,
- ✓ are,
- ✓ and will be

in my life and yours, each Good Friday will be followed by Easter Sunday.