

EASTER RESURRECTION
HE IS ALIVE TO DIE NO MORE

“Then Simon Peter ... went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself.”

On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb ... Then Simon Peter ... went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself (John 20: 1, 5).

The above narrative by John in the Gospel of today captures the earliest sight or evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary, who was rejected by His people, betrayed by a friend, condemned in a Kangaroo court, suffered under Pontius Pilate, crucified, died and was buried. On the third day, He rose again. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ was a historical event that was unexpected, unprecedented and mysterious. Among many historians who have attested to the Resurrection of Jesus was Flavius Josephus, a Jew and Roman citizen, and one of the earliest historians recorded this in his *Testimonium Flavianum*: “When Pilate upon the accusation of the first men amongst us, condemned Jesus to be crucified, those who had formerly loved Him did not cease (to follow Him), for He appeared to them on the third day, living again, as the divine prophets foretold, along with a myriad of other marvellous things concerning Him.” The historian Flavius attests to the fact that after three days Jesus was “living again.” That means Jesus was alive again. The “empty tomb” as witnessed by Mary Magdalene and the two apostles: Peter and John, and many others is an affirmation to the fact that Jesus, because He was alive again could not have been found or could not have remained in the tomb. Tombs are for the dead, not for the living. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the Resurrection of Jesus is a transcendent intervention of God Himself in creation and history (CCC. 648). As a mystery, the Resurrection of Jesus cannot be fully comprehended by mere human intelligence without recourse to faith – only by faith can man understand the things of God.

The Resurrection of Jesus was a confirmation of Jesus’ identity as the True Son of God. As God, Jesus affects His resurrection by His divine power. In John 10: 17-18, Jesus explicitly stated: “I lay down My life that I may take it up again ... I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again.”

The Resurrection of Jesus was also an event in the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Old Testament and Jesus about Himself. St. Paul told the Jews: “What God promised our ancestors He would do, this He has fulfilled to us their children, by raising Jesus from the dead” (Acts 13: 32-33). Again Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 15: 4) that “He was raised in accordance with the Scriptures.” Pope Benedict XVI explains this text thus: “The essential

point is that the Resurrection itself is in accordance with the Scriptures – that it forms part of the whole promise that in Jesus became, not just word, but reality.” The Angel in Matthew 28: 6 told Mary Magdalene and the other women “He is not here, for He has risen as He said.” Yes, Jesus Himself had earlier predicted His Passion, Death and Resurrection. We read in Matthew 16: 21: *From that day Jesus began to make it clear to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem ... and be killed, and raised on the third day.*

The Resurrection is the very foundation of our faith as Christians. As St. Paul puts it: *If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty and your faith comes to nothing* (1 Corinthians 15: 14). The Resurrection of Christ is an assurance of our Justification and Redemption; we become children of the Father, citizens of heaven, heirs of the Kingdom set free from the powers of sin and death. The Resurrection opens us therefore to a new life of grace, where we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5: 7).

What must we do to benefit more from the Resurrection of Christ? First, let us take a cue from Mary Magdalene’s courageous and audacious expression of love. St. John tells us that “It was still dark when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb.” This is risky and out of place for a woman to be out alone at that hour of the time. Why would a woman risk her life to visit the tomb of a dead man? Nothing but love: for “Where there is love, there is no risk; and even if there is a risk, the risk itself is love.” Mary Magdalene loved Jesus sincerely, and true love casts out all fears. She not afraid; she was moved, love. Let our hearts glow with the radiance of the love of Mary Magdalene, so that we may not be afraid to love Jesus overtly. Do not the spirit of the world drown your love but let your love of Christ draw the world to The One Who died and rose again so that the world may have life in full.

St. Paul, in the Second Reading (Col. 3: 1-4) adds another perspective to how we can live out the Easter life: *“Seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”* To seek the things that are above is to live the life of Christ. To desire to please God by doing His will. It means to live, not by the standards of this world, but the standards of Him Who told us: “You are in the world but not of the world.” We are called to be new creatures redeemed by the Blood of the spotless Lamb, Who lives to die no more. May the grace of God be sufficient for us all.

HAPPY EASTER TO YOU ALL