

Easter Sunday, Year C

GOSPEL

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On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, they went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on entering discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee: that the Son of Man had to be handed over into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?' And they remembered his words.

When the women returned from the tomb they told all this to the Eleven and to all the others. The women were Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. The other women with them also told the apostles, but this story of theirs seemed pure nonsense, and they did not believe them.

Peter, however, went running to the tomb. He bent down and saw the binding cloths but nothing else; he then went back home, amazed at what had happened.

(Luke 24:1-12)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- During Jesus' time, women were not considered reliable witnesses in a court of law.
- The burial practices of the time required that the body be anointed with spices; however, Jesus had been buried in haste before the Sabbath, so the women returned at the first opportunity to complete the process of his burial rites.
- The Jewish Sabbath runs from sunset on Friday night to sunset on Saturday night, so the dawn of Sunday morning (the first day of the week) was when this action could occur.
- The first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection are women. This echoes the faith that Mary demonstrated at the beginning of the Gospel of Luke, when she says 'yes' to God's plan for her.

EXPLORING THE WORD

Spend some time reading the many Scripture texts that have been used in the past three days—especially those of the Easter Vigil liturgy, which trace the relationship between God and his people. The first three texts recount the story of creation, the promise to Abraham and the deliverance of Israel from bondage. The extracts from the prophets give voice to God's love for his people. The New Testament readings reflect on the final and definitive act of God—the passing over of Jesus from death to life and our sharing in this mystery through baptism. These are the 'mighty works' of God done on behalf of the people.

- What 'mighty works' has God done for you?
- As you read through and discuss the texts, identify the dominant motifs and major themes.
- Which of the readings speak most clearly to you at this moment? Why?
- What connections can you make between what has just happened to you and what is spoken of in the readings?
- How did you celebrate your new life with family and friends after the events of the Easter Vigil? Share your experiences.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- The women are the first to give witness to the risen Christ. What first led you on the journey that has culminated in today's events?
- How will you give witness to this event?
- Are you 'amazed at what had happened'?
- Reflect together on all that has happened in the last three days. Identify the most powerful moment for you. Why was it so meaningful? Congratulate each other. Celebrate.
- Follow the example of the women by telling your story to others this week. Celebrate your birth into new life in Christ.
- Use the first memorial acclamation this week:

*We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.*

SHARING THE TRADITION

A closer look at the Scripture of the day, to see how it makes more explicit God’s word to us through the teachings of Jesus Christ

There is an essential unity to the three days of the Sacred Triduum, beginning with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, including the washing of the feet, and culminating in the Easter Vigil late on Holy Saturday night, featuring the service of light.

- Explore the unity of themes in the readings.

The newly baptised neophytes now enter the period of mystagogy or post-baptismal catechesis.

- Explain that baptism or reception is not the end of the journey but the beginning of a new journey—one in which both our faith and our place in the community of believers are deepened.

This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it a part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist and doing the works of charity.

(RCIA, §234)

- Explore the meaning of this new journey and discuss how it may be carried out with the community.

SYMBOLS AND IMAGES

The first day of the week, Sunday, is significant for Christians because of Jesus’ resurrection. It is known as the Lord’s Day, and it was set aside from earliest times as the day for the community of believers to gather for the Lord’s Supper or Eucharist.

LIVING THE WORD

Practical ideas for group leaders to employ in connecting Scripture and daily life, with suggestions for music and environment

- How does your community integrate the neophytes into the life of the parish? In what ways do both groups grow together during this time? Are there ways you can better do this?
- Use a candle—preferably the one given to the elect at their baptism—and yellow flowers to recall the resurrection. Sing an Easter song. You could use adaptations of the prayers used during the baptismal liturgy of the Easter Vigil, such as the invitation in the RCIA at §227.

NOTES

Series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.