

Easter Sunday, Year B

GOSPEL

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When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the Mother of James, and Salome, brought spices with which to go and anoint him. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week they went to the tomb, just as the sun was rising.

They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' But when they looked they could see that the stone—which was very big—had already been rolled back. On entering the tomb they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right-hand side, and they were struck with amazement. But he said to them, 'There is no need for alarm. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here. See, here is the place where they laid him. But you must go and tell his disciples and Peter, "He is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him, just as he told you."'

(Mark 16:1-7)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The Easter Triduum (which means 'three days'), lasting from Holy Thursday evening to Easter Sunday evening, is the climax of the Church's year.
- Holy Thursday is sometimes known as Maundy Thursday, a corruption of the Latin word for 'commandment', *mandatum*. This is to commemorate the 'new commandment' that Jesus gave his followers at the Last Supper: love one another as I have loved you.
- The stories of the Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus were the earliest stories told and later recorded by the early church. The commemoration of the events of the Triduum is the earliest of Church celebrations, when the first Christians gathered to break bread together.
- Good Friday and Easter Saturday are the only days of the year on which Mass is not celebrated.
- The women come to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus early on Sunday morning because it is the first chance they have to do so. The Jewish Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. During this time no 'work' can be done, so the women must wait until dawn on the first day of the week.

EXPLORING THE WORD

You could perhaps allow time to read over some of the many Scripture texts used over these three days of the Triduum. You could point out the unity of the three days and how the readings fit together. It is essentially one liturgy with various moments. It is not simply a re-enactment of the past but a way of drawing people into the present reality of the mystery of God.

- The death and resurrection of Jesus is the fundamental pattern of life for the Christian. Give some examples of dying and rising from your life or the lives of the saints.
- In what ways was the baptism of the neophytes a dying and rising to new life in Christ?
- In what ways did the liturgy of these days draw you into the mystery?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- What memories of these three days do you want to remain with you always?
- Do you feel a sense of 'amazement' at what has happened to you?
- Reflect together on the ceremonies of the Vigil. Share responses and recollections. What was the highlight for you? What did it mean to you? How did you celebrate with friends and family? How will your life now change?
- Light a candle each time you pray during this Easter season as a sign of keeping the light of Christ consciously before you.
- Repeat this proclamation of the mystery of faith often this week:

We proclaim your death O Lord, and profess your resurrection until you come again.

