

Octave of Easter April 19, 2020

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Scripture Readings

First Reading: Acts 2:42-47 The disciples devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching and the communal life.

Psalm 118 This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad.

<https://www.shazam.com/track/56388733/psalm-118-let-us-rejoice>

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9 There is cause for rejoicing here!

Alternate Gospel: John 20:1-18 Mary Magdalen and Jesus

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

Early in the morning on the first day of the week,

While it was still dark,

Mary of Magdala came to the tomb.

She saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance, so she ran off to Simon Peter and the other disciple—the one Jesus loved--and told them “The Rabbi has been taken from the tomb! We don’t know where they have put Jesus!”

At that, Peter and the other disciple started out toward the tomb. They were running side by side, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He didn’t enter, but bent down to peer in and saw the linen wrappings lying on the ground. Then Simon Peter arrived and entered the tomb. He observed the linen wrappings lying on the ground, and saw the piece of cloth that had covered Jesus head lying not with the wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the disciple who arrived first at the tomb went in. He saw and believed. As yet they didn’t understand the scripture that Jesus was to rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Meanwhile, Mary stood weeping beside the tomb.
Even as she wept, she stooped to peer inside,
and there she saw two angels in dazzling robes.
One was seated at the head and the other at the foot
of the place where Jesus' body had lain.

They asked her, "Why are you weeping?"
She answered them, "Because they have taken away my Rabbi,
and I don't know where they have put the body."

No sooner had she said this than she turned around and
Caught sight of Jesus standing there,
But she did not know it was Jesus.
He asked her, "Why are you weeping?
For whom are you looking?"

She supposed it was the gardener, so she said,
"Please, if you're the one who carried Jesus away,
tell me where you've laid the body and I will take it away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"
She turned to him and said "Raboni!" –which means "Teacher."

Jesus then said, "Don't hold on to me,
for I have not yet ascended to Abba God.
Rather, go to the sisters and brothers and tell them,
'I'm ascending to my Abba and to your Abba,
My God and your God!'"

Mary of Magdala went to the disciples.
"I have seen the Teacher!" she announced.
Then she reported what the savior had said to her.

The Good News of Salvation!

Homily for the Second Sunday of Easter

A good theme for the next few weeks would be Mary Magdalene's words:

"I have seen Jesus!"

Our Gospel reading begins early in the morning, while it is still dark. The darkness can be symbolic of unknowing. Mary Magdala came to the tomb alone and sees that the stone is rolled away. It is unknown if she came to anoint the body, to be near Jesus, or just to mourn at the tomb.

Mary goes to get Peter and the beloved Disciple. Peter is slow so the Other Disciple gets there first. No where in the Bible does it say that the Other Disciple was John. The Other Disciple stands at the door and sees the linens. Peter runs up, enters, and sees the linens that are folded neatly. What does that mean? Grave robbers would not have taken the time to neatly fold the linens. Then the Other Disciple comes in and believed! Believed what? The author of Gospel of John has the Other Disciple come to faith first, even before the Risen Jesus appears or prophetic Scripture is recalled.

It is unclear what exactly he believed because the next line is "They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise. Perhaps what

they believed was Mary's first report that "They have taken Jesus' body."

They, Peter and the Other Disciple, 'believe,' but don't understand. Then they go back. They came to check on Mary's report and see that she is speaking the truth, but they go back completely untransformed. The empty tomb wasn't enough for them. In fact, this scene ends with Mary going back to tell them that she has seen Jesus, but finds them all still locked in a room.

At the heart of this gospel reading for Easter is the resurrection appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene, leading to her confession "I have seen Jesus." **Mary is the first witness of the resurrection!** This is a wonderful story of a seeking woman, who is surprised by what she finds, or better, by the One who finds her. Hearing her name spoken by Jesus' familiar voice brings a transformation of her grief and the opening of a new world.

Mourning is important. We cannot get to healing without mourning first. Resurrection doesn't take away tears, it just means that tears are not the end of the story.

Mary sees Jesus, but does not recognize him until he says her name. When Jesus says "Mary," she replies "Rabbi!" It is reminiscent of "My sheep listen to my voice" (John 10:27). Jesus tells Mary to "Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them I'm going up to my Abba and your

Abba, my God and your God.” Jesus sent Mary to bring the Good News, the definition of an Apostle. Mary becomes the **Apostle to the Apostles**. The relationship status that Jesus gives the Disciples is one of equality. The Disciples are siblings. They share the same Abba.

The good news of Easter is that God does not operate within the limits of what we can see! Easter faith in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, points us in hope to the possibility that God really is working to make all things new."

Questions to ponder:

- Where do you find Jesus in your everyday life?
- How does Resurrection make a difference for you?
- Can you think of some ways we as a community can move out of our 'safe space' to spread the Good News?

Stay safe. Stay healthy everyone!