

# Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

Sunday, April 12, 2020

## Readings & Background

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### This Sunday's Readings

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#### First Reading

*Acts of the Apostles 10:34a,37-43*

Peter preaches about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

#### Responsorial Psalm

*Psalm 118:1-2,16-17,22-23*

Rejoice in this day of the Lord.

#### Second Reading

*Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8*

Colossians: Having been raised by Christ, be concerned with what is above.

1 Corinthians: Let us celebrate this feast with new yeast.

#### Gospel Reading

*John 20:1-9*

Mary of Magdala finds that the stone has been removed  
from Jesus' tomb.

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#### Background on the Gospel Reading

Today we begin the ***Easter Season, our 50-day meditation on the mystery of Christ's Resurrection.***

#### **Our Gospel today tells us about the disciples' discovery of the empty tomb.**

It concludes by telling us that they did not yet understand that Jesus had risen from the dead. Thus, the details provided are not necessarily meant to offer proof of the Resurrection. The details invite us to reflect upon a most amazing gift, that is faith in Jesus and his Resurrection.

#### **Each of the four Gospels tells us that Jesus' empty tomb was first discovered by women.**

This is notable because in first-century Jewish society women could not serve as legal witnesses. In the case of John's Gospel, the only woman attending the tomb is Mary of Magdala. Unlike the Synoptic accounts, John's Gospel does not describe an appearance of angels at the tomb. Instead, Mary is simply said to have observed that the stone that had sealed the tomb had been moved, **and she runs to alert Simon Peter and the beloved disciple.** Her statement to them is telling. She assumes that Jesus' body has been removed, perhaps stolen. She does not consider that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

**Simon Peter and the beloved disciple race to the tomb,** presumably to verify Mary's report. The beloved disciple arrives first but does not enter the tomb until after Simon Peter. This detail paints a vivid picture, as does the detail provided about the burial cloths. Some scholars believe that the presence of the burial cloths in the tomb offers evidence to the listener that Jesus' body had not been stolen (it is understood that grave robbers would have taken the burial cloths together with the body).

The Gospel passage concludes, however, that even having seen the empty tomb and the burial cloths, the disciples do not yet understand about the Resurrection. In the passage that follows, Mary of Magdala meets Jesus but mistakes him for the gardener. In the weeks ahead, the Gospel readings from our liturgy will show us how the disciples came to believe in Jesus' Resurrection through his appearances to them. Our Easter faith is based on their witness to both the empty tomb and their continuing relationship with Jesus—in his appearances and in his gift of the Holy Spirit.

## Family Connection

### Gospel Reading John 20:1-9

Mary of Magdala finds that the stone has been removed from Jesus' tomb.

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***In the Easter Gospel we hear about how the disciples found the tomb empty three days after Jesus' death.*** We are also told that they do not yet understand the Scriptures or that Jesus had been raised from the dead. That ***understanding gradually unfolded for the disciples as they began to experience the risen Lord.*** Similarly, our understanding of Jesus' Resurrection unfolds for us throughout our lives. In the weeks ahead, we will hear how the first disciples moved from confusion, doubt, and scepticism to faith. ***Their experience can teach us how we too might receive this gift of faith from God.***

Gather your family members and ask them to share what they know about the events that happened in the days after Jesus' crucifixion. Invite your family to imagine that they are among Jesus' first disciples.

***Read together today's Gospel, John 20:1-9.***

Reflect together on the Gospel with questions such as these:

If you had been among the first disciples who heard that the stone had been removed from Jesus' tomb and that Jesus' body was no longer there, what would you think?

What did Mary of Magdala, Simon Peter, and the disciple whom Jesus loved think had happened?

Recall that this experience is the first indication Jesus' disciples have that he is risen.

Throughout the Easter season, we will learn more about how the disciples came to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

***Pray together using today's psalm, Psalm 118:***

***"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad."***