

He is Risen; We Believe!

I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS

FIRST READING (Acts 10:34a, 37-43)

The Kerygma: The Christ-Event

^{34*} /Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, * “In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. ³⁷what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached,

Baptism of Jesus

^{38m}how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth* with the holy Spirit and power.

Ministry of Jesus

He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses* of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and (in) Jerusalem.

Death of Jesus

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree.

Resurrection of Jesus

⁴⁰This man God raised (on) the third day

Appearances of Jesus

and granted that he be visible, ⁴¹ⁿnot to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after **he rose from the dead.**

Commissioning of the apostles to preach: forgiveness to those who believe

^{42o}He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead.* ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

THE FOCUS: The Resurrection of Jesus

COMMENTARY AND REFLECTIONS

- Peter in his preaching (kerygma) is bold to proclaim to the people what happened to Jesus.
- His preaching is centered on the person of Jesus (*passion, death and resurrection*). He begins with Jesus’ baptism, then to his Galilean ministry up to Jerusalem, where he is put to death but resurrects on the third day.



- Today’s preachings or sermons are sometimes centered on teachings on morality, etc., not any more on Christ-event. Many preachers would like to entertain rather than preach who Jesus is. Many people demand that the preachers crack a joke.
- People must pay attention to the preacher’s reflections on Jesus and find ways and means to apply them in their lives. Preachings are supposed to make us closer to Jesus and more committed to him.
- The original disciples feel they are witnesses to all that happened to Jesus (*from baptism up to his death and resurrection*).
- True disciples feel they are committed to proclaim , preach the mystery of Christ, in the hope that those who believe will be forgiven and be given eternal life and start a new life.
- The disciples do not just give witness for its own sake, to entertain people.
- They have a purpose to carry out the mission commissioned to them by the resurrected Christ.
- Preaching is not a joke. Witnessing to the resurrected Christ must bring about forgiveness of sins (spiritual healing) and renewal.
- Our authorized preachers (ordained deacons and preachers) must bring about conversion, forgiveness and hope when they open their mouths at the pulpit.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23)

**THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE;
LET US REJOICE AND BE GLAD.**

SECOND READING (Col 3:1-4)

^{1*} *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. ^{3b}For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.*

THE FOCUS: On being raised with Christ (our own resurrection)

COMMENTARY

- Paul (or some other author, a disciple of Paul, who came much later), reflects on the mystery of the resurrection.
- V.1 presumes baptism (rising with Christ) and urges the baptized Christian to go up higher in his value system (seek what is above).
- V.2 reinforces this idea. The Christian must not get stuck with what is earthly.
- In v.3, the author says that to be raised is to die to the world.
- V.4 says that at the end times, the Christian will also appear in glory like Jesus.

REFLECTIONS

The resurrection of Christ also brings us about to our own resurrection. As we all know, this is done during our baptism.

What are the implications of being resurrected?

As baptized Christians, we must be consistent in living according to the new life brought about by our baptism, a living which is a participation in the resurrection of Christ.

Baptized Christians should no longer live according to the standards of the world which seeks material things only.

GOSPEL READING (Jn 20:1-9)

Mary of Madala and initial assessment

^{1*} On the first day of the week,^a Mary of Mag-

dala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and **saw** the stone removed from the tomb.^a ^b ²So she ran^a and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

Peter and John (whom Jesus loved)

^{3*} So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. ⁴They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; ⁵he bent down and **saw** the burial cloths there, but did not go in. ^{6c}When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and **saw** the burial cloths^a there, ^{7d}and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.

John saw and believed

^{8*} Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he **saw** and **believed**. ^{9*} *“For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned home.*

THE FOCUS: They Saw and Believed

COMMENTARY

The absence of the body of Jesus in the tomb provokes a lot of movements (*running, reporting, going to, coming in*).

It also provokes two major interpretations.

On the part of Mary of Magdala, she reports to Peter and John, “*They have taken the Lord from the tomb...*” (*no implication of the resurrection whatsoever*)

On the part of the two disciples, they believe when they are able to sort out the meaning of the burial cloths lying there, without the body of Jesus.

If it is true that the Lord has been taken from the tomb, the cloths also should have been taken away.

The two disciples rightly conclude that Jesus must have risen from the dead.

The evangelist comments that now they understand the scriptures of old that Jesus has to rise from the dead.

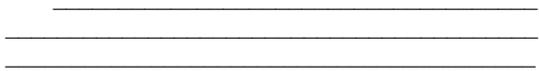
REFLECTIONS

The visit of the woman, Mary of Magdala, to the tomb of Jesus, triggers the discovery of the empty tomb.

Upon hearing the report, Peter immediately, along with John, goes to verify it (fact-finding). The disciples take seriously the woman's report. This leads them to believe in His resurrection.

If Mary of Magdala did not visit the tomb and report to Peter and John, we would not have known what happened to Jesus later on.

In the gospel text, we have four important elements leading us to the belief in Jesus' resurrection: 1. visit, 2. report, 3. fact finding, and 4. correct conclusion.



II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING

The First Reading summarizes the whole life of Jesus beginning from his baptism up to his passion, death and resurrection.

The Second Reading reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus Christ urges baptized Christians to change their value system. Christians must live lives proper to their new identity as Christians, as risen ones also (obtained through baptism).

The Gospel Reading tells us the story of how the resurrection of Jesus is found out by Mary of Magdala and Peter and John.

How to develop your homily

You, preacher, are obliged to develop the theological meaning of the resurrection of the Lord.

You may pay attention a little bit to the customs and traditions of your parish (community) like the *salubong* (encounter) but you should not lose track of the meaning of the resurrection.

To be scriptural, you must base the meaning of the resurrection on the assigned readings of today, not just anything that comes to your mind. There are lots of texts about the resurrection of Jesus, but here you prioritize what today's readings are telling us, to give justice to what the liturgists have proposed to us (approved by the church).

The Gospel Reading tells us that we need to exert effort to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. We don't just believe mentally, but also physically. We have to respond with our whole bodies and then make intelligent conclusions.

Based on the First Reading, we not only focus on the fact, belief of the resurrection, but also on what Jesus had done (teaching and healing) before and then on our responsibility to proclaim the mystery, to be active and living witnesses to the resurrected Christ.

We cannot separate the efforts and activities of Christ from his resurrection. We cannot also separate faith from actions. Challenge the Christian believers not just to believe mentally, but most of all, to go around giving witness (*visit*). Physically all Christians must exert efforts to proclaim the good news of the resurrection.

The Second Reading challenges us to pay attention to heavenly values as befit our Christian calling through baptism. Christian believers are supposed to seek higher values. Lower values are the world's values: *money, prestige, power, narcissism, vanity, consumerism, tasting all kinds of things, competing for best positions, etc., conquering the other, etc.*

We rise with Christ through our baptism. We are going to renew our baptismal vows right after the homily. Publicly we will announce that we choose God, not Satan. We Christians must know our priorities now.

Our parishes, our communities and families are not places where we advance our personal agenda, but God's agenda.

We use the resources of our parishes, etc. to help proclaim that Jesus is truly risen and that we are also truly risen from sin.

Craving for something which does not advance the message of the resurrected Christ is a sin. Christians, parishioners must seek Christ and his message of peace, joy, love and salvation.

In the eucharist, we celebrate the joy of the risen Christ. We receive during holy communion the living Jesus, the Jesus who is still alive, the one whom God raised from the dead. In the eucharist, we are strengthened by the body and blood of Jesus Christ, in the forms of bread and wine, to make our faith in him active in the church and in the world.

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III. OUR CONTEXT

1. What are liberating messages we hear this Easter? (HM)