

Easter Sunday
April 1, 2018
Fr. Rick Lorenz

Reflection

Like many of you, I get my news online. A few days ago, cbc.ca had an article about the Jews celebrating Passover. The picture showed a girl reading the *Haggadah*; the story of Exodus that is read during the *Seder* meal. Another article talked about Easter. The picture was a chocolate Easter bunny covered in tin foil. If someone didn't know any better, here's what they would learn from these pictures. First, Passover marks the liberation of the Jewish people: a matter of importance. Second, Easter is a holiday involving candy. It's a boring version of Hallowe'en: no costumes, no tricks and a smaller number of treats. Our experiences shape our beliefs. What we see and hear is the raw material for what we come to know. Today is Easter Sunday, but the Ordo calls it "the Solemnity of the Resurrection of the Lord." These words also appear in the missalette "Living with Christ." So today "We bring you the good news, that what God promised to the fathers, this day he has fulfilled to us, their children, by raising Jesus."

The Gospel points out a couple responses to the fact of the Resurrection. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb "early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark." She went in the sadness of the passion, despairing in the failure of love. Seeing the stone removed, she concluded that "they have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Ps 118
Col 3:1-4
Jn 20:1-9

Our journey of faith is made in the dark, stumbling over sin, guided by a desire for truth that remains veiled and cloaked. We walk in the solitude of a body that can only be in one place at one time, having a succession of experiences that begin at conception and end with death. In a natural way, we can only know so much. "We do not know where they have laid him." But we can know more, in a supernatural way. Notice what she did in the shock of the missing stone, the missing body. "She ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple." Mary Magdalene ran to what would become the Church, whose ministers confer the supernatural virtue of faith. It lets us believe and know what we hear proclaimed but cannot prove: that God is love, in three persons; that Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Peter and the other disciple (whom we conclude is John) ran to the tomb. John followed Peter inside. "He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself." When the Gospel was written, someone finished eating would toss his napkin aside. It was a sign to the waiter that he was done, the dishes could be cleared away, he wasn't coming back. But if the napkin was folded neatly, it was a sign that he was coming back. Leave the dishes alone, because I'm not done eating!

When John saw the cloth "rolled up in a place by itself," he might have taken it as a sign that Jesus would return. At the very least, according to the catechism, "he realized from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus (640)." "He saw and believed" even though they did not yet understand.

Paul tells the Colossians: "If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above." Like Mary Magdalene, we come to the Church for solace and wisdom, and receive forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Like John, we see and believe the signs left by Jesus: the sacraments of the Church that let us believe what she proclaims. Like Jesus, baptized and anointed, we go about doing good, preaching through lives centered on hope: the Christian hope - "I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord."