

## **EASTER SUNDAY**

**Fr Callistus Khathali - HOMILY : EASTER SUNDAY 17h April 2022**

**John 20:8**

***Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed.***

The gospel of today (John 20:1-9) begins with Mary Magdalene who went to the tomb of the Lord, early in the morning of the first day of the week while it was still dark, and the stone covering the Lord's tomb was rolled away and the tomb was empty! This is a biblical proof that the resurrection took place while it was still dark, hence the holy night of the resurrection that we celebrated last night.

I would like to focus on the other disciple, ***the beloved disciple who is not called by name in the fourth gospel*** (the gospel according to John). He is presented here in verse 8 as the one who, upon entering the empty tomb, he saw and he believed. It is good to note that the reality of the empty tomb was very frustrating for others who were closed to Jesus. On Tuesday as we continue with this passage we will read that Mary Magdalene remained outside the tomb weeping as it was empty and the Lord was taken away. On Wednesday we will read the story of the **two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)** all frustrated and even to the point of giving up because of all what had happened. Their main frustration was that Lord was nowhere to be seen. We will conclude the Easter Octave (eight days of Easter) next Sunday with Thomas wanting to only believe not just after seeing for himself, but after putting his fingers and hand into the Lord's wounds. This was after the Lord had appeared to other disciples.

The beloved disciple in today's gospel makes sense of what was the cause of confusion and frustration for his peers. What did he really see in the empty tomb? What prompted him to believe? What did he believe in? Let us remember that belief has nothing to do with issues that can be proved beyond reasonable doubt. The beloved disciple believed in what the Lord had told them talking about how he was to be handed over to evil men who will make him suffer and eventually kill him, but then he was to rise on the third day. The empty tomb on its own is not the proof of the resurrection. The beloved disciple remembered what the Lord had said, and believed.

The conduct of the beloved disciple is the great example for us all. As the Lord foretold of his betrayal by one of the twelve apostles, it was to the beloved disciple that he revealed who it was that was to betray him. As Jesus dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the other ten did not understand. In fact this gesture was given as a vote of confidence to Judas. The beloved disciple knew what was happening, and kept it to himself. Just like Jesus, the beloved disciple did not embarrass Judas publicly. The beloved disciple was there when his senior Peter denied the Lord three times, and yet we find him today allowing Peter to enter the empty tomb first. Peter as the leader was to be the one to declare the Lord's resurrection. The beloved disciple did not look at Peter as an embarrassment after denying the Lord. He protected and respected him as his leader, the very same thing that the Lord did. The conduct of the beloved disciple must have led the Lord to give his mother to him while he was hanging on the cross.

For us therefore, the call is to behave like the beloved disciple if we are to enter into the mysteries we are celebrating. In the face of sins committed by his fellow apostles, he did not gossip about it, he kept to himself. Confronted with the empty tomb he believed in what the Lord had said. His general conduct was inspired by what the Lord said and did. We can truly renew and change the face of the earth if we adopt the conduct and behaviour of the beloved disciple.

***May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.***

***I will meditate on the Glorious Mysteries today as I pray for your personal intentions.***

***Wishing you and your loved ones a Happy Easter!***

**Fr Callistus Khathali**