

## **Easter Homily 2024: 'Easter changes Everything'**

On this holiest night we celebrate the risen Christ, foundation and corner stone of our faith, in this 'night of all nights', the Feast of all feasts, which is the *completion and culmination* of Paschal Triduum. If original 'Pasqua' meant the passage from slavery to freedom, the new Pascua means passage from *death to new life*. The Lord is risen, Alleluia!

The gospels start the Resurrection narrative by saying: On the first day of the week, a few women went to the tomb of Jesus. Two things merit our attention here: a) *the action of the women* b) *the first day of the week*. These women, before doing anything in the morning, go to the tomb. In fact, they were earnestly waiting for the break of the day, because their hearts, and thoughts were filled with Jesus. This is exactly what Jesus taught: *where your treasure is, there, your heart will be*. Yes, Jesus was their treasure. This reveals, in their list of priority, Jesus had the very first place.

These women, reminds me of my mom who early in the morning got up and started prayer and went to the church. Therefore, these women going to the tomb are point for our self-examination. After getting up, my first thought and my action are signs of where my treasure is. Truly, where is my treasure? Where is Jesus in my list of priorities? How do I start my week? In a certain sense, these women represent all those who on Sunday early morning go to church. Yes, let you too have the grace to begin the week with Christ, with the glory of his resurrection.

1. Even though the reference to the *first day of the week* will make us think of Sunday, this will lead us to book of Exodus, where God does the work of creation for 7 days, starting from Sunday, and resting on Sabbath-Saturday. Means, the first day in the old creation story was Sunday. If so, by resurrecting on Sunday, Jesus is marking the *beginning of a new creation*. In other words, Jesus, through his death and Res. renews everything. Besides, look at the first day of creation; God said, "let there be light", and light came into existence. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world". So, when God said, 'let there be light', that was the pre-figuration of the coming of the true Light into the world that illuminates everyone. That light is Christ, who brings to perfection everything. By reposing in the tomb on Saturday, Jesus affirmed the old sabbath, the covenant of old creation, and instead, by Resur on Sunday, he sanctified *Sunday as the sign of covenant of new creation*; thus began the Sunday celebration. The Sabbath

of the New Creation is not Saturday, but Sunday. Even though, the women going to the tomb showed their deep love for Jesus, in fact it was a fruitless journey, as they could find only the empty tomb. The question remains: *Is our journey also to find an empty tomb?* No. Today we do not see Jesus in the tomb. The first three appearances of the risen Lord teach us, where to find him; in other words, 'where our treasure should be'.

1) Firstly, *Magdalene finds Jesus as the gardener*. This reminds us, that the grace that was lost in the garden of Eden is regained by the second Adam-Jesus- appearing as the gardener, is also the fulfillment of divine mysteries. Yes, He is the owner of the garden, that is '*the Church*', and the Church becomes the re-establishment of paradise as well. Magdalene recognizes the risen Lord, by *listening to His call-Mary*. Therefore, the first way to find the risen Lord is to listen to *His Word*, his call.

2) In the second appearance, the disciples of Emmaus thought the one joining them was a traveler, but they recognized him at the breaking of the bread, sharing bread. This reminds us, the *second way to find and experience the risen Lord is the sacraments*; and confirms that one who walks with us is Christ himself.

3) Third appearance to the disciples at the shore of Tiberias, who were fishing throughout the night without any result, Jesus asks them to cast on the right side, and receives an abundant catch. They *recognized Jesus by seeing the net* full of fish. The net is the symbol of the church. 'Casting net on the right side' signifies, leaving it to God's will. This teaches us to seek, find and experience the risen Lord in the Church. Any disciples who act without the Master end up in fruitless work.

Jesus will repeat the same question to all those, who spend long time before TV/Media for entertainments by escaping the Sunday Liturgy or prayer, yet not finding real joy in life. B&S, therefore, today let's decide to hold on to the three essential ways of finding and experiencing the risen Lord in our life, *through the Word of God, the Sacraments and the Church community*, as they are closely connected. Because, you cannot have one without the other.

May the risen Lord grant you the grace to find him and experience him deep within your heart today. May the joy of the risen Lord fill your hearts and homes. Have a Blessed and Happy Easter! Amen. (Fr. James cfic)