opusdei.org

Jesus Has Overcome Death

The Prelate's Easter Sunday reflections, broadcast on EWTN world radio

03/18/2005

"When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices that they might go to the tomb to embalm the body of Jesus. Very early on the first day of the week, the sun having risen, they went to the tomb." Thus begins St. Mark's account of what happened that morning two

thousand years ago on the first Christian Passover.

Jesus had been buried. To all human appearances, his life and his message had ended in utter failure. His disciples, confused and terrified, had dispersed. Even the women on their way to perform a pious gesture ask each other, "Who will take the stone away from the entrance to the tomb for us?" "Nevertheless," St. Josemaría Escrivá observes, "they kept going. You and I, how do we handle uncertainties? Do we have their holy determination, or must we admit that we feel ashamed when we consider the decisiveness, the boldness, the daring of those women?" To fulfill the will of God, to be faithful to the law of Christ, to live our faith coherently can seem very difficult sometimes. Obstacles appear that seem insurmountable. But they really are not; God always wins.

The saga of Jesus of Nazareth does not end with his ignominious death on the Cross. The last word is his glorious Resurrection. In Baptism, we Christians have died and risen with Christ—dead to sin, and alive in God. “O, Christ,” we can say with the Holy Father, John Paul II, “how could you deny us the grace of the ineffable gift you have given us this night! The mystery of your Death and Resurrection flows into the baptismal water to purify the old man of flesh and restore his youth” (*Homily*, Apr. 15, 2001).

Today the Church, full of joy, cries out: “This is the Day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad!” This cry of jubilation will continue for fifty days throughout the Easter season, as an echo of St. Paul’s words: “Now that you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Put your whole

heart into heavenly goods, not earthly ones, for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

It's logical to think, as the Tradition of the Church does, that the risen Christ would have appeared first to his Most Holy Mother. The fact that she is not with the holy women in the Gospel account, as John Paul II indicates, suggests that Our Lady had already met Jesus. "This deduction is also confirmed," the Pope adds, "by the fact that Jesus wanted the first witnesses of the Resurrection to be the women who had remained faithful at the foot of the Cross, and therefore, more firm in their faith" (*Audience*, May 21, 1997). Mary alone had fully kept faith during those bitter hours of the Passion. It is therefore natural that the Lord would have first appeared to her."

We must always remain close to the Virgin, but even more in the Easter season, and learn its meaning from her. How eagerly she had awaited the Resurrection! She knew that Jesus had come to save the world, and as a result, to suffer and die; but she also knew that He could not remain subject to death, for He is Life.

A good way to live Easter would be to impel ourselves to get others to participate in the life of Christ, fulfilling with elegance the new commandment of charity which the Lord gave to us the night before his Passion: “By this will all know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” The risen Christ repeats that to each one of us. He tells us: “Truly love each other; strive every day to serve others down to the smallest details, so as to make the lives of those who live with you more agreeable.”

So let us go once more to find Jesus with his Most Holy Mother. How contented the Virgin would be on contemplating that Most Sacred Humanity—flesh of her flesh, life of her life—now glorified! Let us ask her to teach us how to sacrifice ourselves for others, even without their being aware of it, without even waiting for them to thank us, eager to pass unnoticed in the way we possess God's life and pass it on to others. Today let us go to the Queen of Heaven, Regina Coeli, the salutation proper to the Easter season: "Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia! For He whom you deserved to bear, alleluia! Has risen as He said, alleluia! Pray for us to God, alleluia! Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia! For the Lord is truly risen, alleluia!"

pdf | document generated automatically from https://dev.opusdei.org/en-ca/article/jesus-has-overcome-death/ (08/09/2025)