

RDL – FOURTH WEEK – **Supplementary Material**

Easter Homily

We left them on Friday at the burial place. The women who had followed Jesus (his closest friends had run away), and Mary his mother. It is not hard to imagine the grief and pain in their hearts as they watched his body come down from the cross, be wrapped in burial shrouds, and carried to that hollow rock where he was enthroned. The stone that rolled across the tomb was a stone that crushed their very hearts. It is not hard to imagine how John the Disciple took the arm of Mary of Nazareth, nearly blinded by her tears, nearly prostrate in her grief, and led her to her quarters. Jesus himself had entrusted Mary to his care, and John, in his filial devotion, saw Mary's need for solitude and reflection and he leaves her alone in the darkness of her own tomb; her lonely, grief-filled quarters.

In those Sabbath hours, Mary watched and wept, waited and wondered. Through her tears and fears she had the firm faith and the happy hope that He would soon return. His words had always hinted that the temple of his body, once destroyed, would soon be rebuilt. While weeping and waiting, she remembered. She remembered an angel's greeting, and the sudden change in her body when she knew she had conceived. She remembered a census of the Roman Empire and having to seek haven in a place where animals were kept. She remembered the joy of feeling, seeing, hearing her newborn son. She remembered a terrifying flight into exile and an almost-unnoticed return to their native town. She remembered a son quick to learn, as prayerful as she, trying to understand how his father could be God. She remembered his youthful independence when he felt justified in staying behind in Jerusalem's temple. It was, after all, his Father's house!

Clement J. Petrik, SJ, Homily, Easter Sunday, 2000

A Consoling Companion Faithful Beyond Any Doubt

In the 4th Week, Ignatius counsels the retreatant that, ... “The divinity of Jesus, which seemed hidden during the Passion, now appears and manifests itself so miraculously in his holy resurrection through its true and most holy effects.”

[Exx. 223]

The recognition of the risen Jesus for the early followers was always a sudden joy, surprise, and restored hope. Especially after the Ascension, the issue for them was to recognize the extraordinary reality of Jesus’ risen presence in the ordinariness of daily life. When the focus on that risen presence is lost, daily life can become dull, boring, deadening. Finding the extraordinary disguised in the ordinary is the challenge that faces our daily faith. This enrichment of everyday life can be another blessing of that risen, faithful Companion, if we are eager enough and sensitive enough to His presence. Another effect of Jesus’ resurrection appears at the very end of Paul’s lengthy reflection in Chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthians. This whole chapter is like a textbook exposition of many aspects of this central experience of the Resurrection. But it concludes on a very practical note about the daily action and ministry. It reveals the enthusiasm and the steadfast confidence that Paul received from the risen Jesus’ constant presence: ‘Never give in to them... never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord’s work always, never admit defeat, keep on working in steadfast confidence, knowing that in the Lord you cannot be laboring in vain. [1 Corinthians 15:58]

N. T. Wright comments on this verse that Paul does not say therefore, ‘sit back and relax, because there is a wonderful future ahead of you.’ He finds in the whole chapter, and especially in the final verse, the belief that we Christians have important daily creative work to do in helping the new resurrected creation to be revealed.

George Aschenbrenner, SJ, *The Way*, July, 2007.