

EASTER - A

« HE SAW
AND HE BELIEVED...



A few years ago, I experienced the Easter Vigil according to the Byzantine rite for the first time. In the darkness, we all gathered outside around the celebrant. Silently, we walked in procession toward the church, whose door was closed. The celebrant knocked three times, and from inside, the door was opened. To our surprise, it was completely dark inside... There was nothing inside except a shroud!

This experience recalls Mary Magdalene's surprise when, at the first light of dawn, she runs to the tomb. Her heart still troubled by the events of the previous day and weighed down by the loss of a loved one, she wants to pay a final tribute to the one she loves. As she approaches the tomb where Jesus had been laid, she realizes that the stone that sealed it has been removed. She stands stunned before the empty tomb: Jesus' body is no longer there! Let us put ourselves in her place. A woman alone, it is still night. She must have been afraid and completely distraught. She runs to tell Peter and John that the Lord has been taken away... the only possibility for the disappearance of Jesus' body.

John looks inside and sees the linen cloths lying flat, the shroud rolled up separately in its place. Following Peter, he enters the tomb. He saw and believed, says the Gospel. (John 20:8) John then becomes the first believer to make the first profession of faith in the Resurrection of Jesus. He sees the subtle signs of God's passage. He perceives the first fruits of new life. The love that dwells in his heart grasps what escapes the eyes of others. He saw and believed!

The evangelist Saint John presents us here with the ultimate experience of faith, and it happens without seeing Jesus. He invites us to take a fresh look at what constitutes the empty tombs of our lives. It is an invitation to believe that at the very heart of what seems meaningless to us, there is a loving presence that hopes for us and waits for us. A presence such that we can realize with certainty that Jesus is truly here and now. I see him, he is very much alive. Isn't faith that gift received from God that allows me to see realities in another way and to believe that He is there, very present, embracing me in his love?

As baptized Christians, the Risen Christ calls us to live this Easter experience every day. That is, to take a fresh look at ourselves, at others, at events, at Creation, in order to discover, beyond the apparent signs, the seeds of life that He has already planted there. Just as spring buds need a little sunshine to open, the seeds of life of the Risen One already present in ourselves and in the world need a little touch of our love, illuminated by Jesus, to grow and blossom. Then we will truly be able to say, "I see and I believe." For with Jesus, love always triumphs over our empty tombs.



*Yes, the Lord is risen!
Yes, he is truly ALIVE!
Let us proclaim it with our whole lives!*

Happy Easter

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