

H - 180331 Holy Week Easter Vigil

I. ASTOUNDING

Can you imagine the astounding confrontation between a group of grieving women and the angel in today's Gospel?

Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome were in the throws of a grief that is so intense it is almost indescribable . . .

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EX: Picture at Auschwitz

- a. Women stretching their hands through a barbed wire fence
- b. Impaling their arms of the barbs
- c. As their children were being led away to the gas chambers
- d. The terror and grief on their faces tells the story of their sudden realization that their children would soon be murdered!

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It was this intense grief that seized the hearts of these three women as they approached Jesus' tomb.

All was lost, all hope was DEAD!

The Messiah was a vain promise and God had abandoned them to this worlds hatred and injustice.

AND THEN THE MOST
UNEXPECTED THING
OCCURRED . . . A MOST
SHATTERING ENCOUNTER!

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Q: On entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has

been raised; he is not here.

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JESUS IS RISEN IN GLORY, NOT
RECUSITATED . . .

HE IS ALIVE, MORE ALIVE
THAN ANYTHING WE CAN
IMAGINE OR UNDERSTAND!!!!

AND EVERYTHING IS
CHANGED!

THE WORLD AND OUR
UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S
RELATION TO US IS SUDDENLY

TURNED UPSIDE DOWN, THE IMPOSSIBLE IS NOW A REALITY AND EVERY HOPE RISES IN OUR HEARTS BUT IN AN INCREDIBLY MORE VIVID AND ASTOUNDING WAY!

II. RESURRECTION

But, something even more essential to this encounter of women and an angel now confronts us.

What does all this MEAN FOR YOU AND ME, HERE AND NOW?

St. Paul, a few years later writes:

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Q: If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him.

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Think of all those that you have loved and who have died!

Their death seems to have been the final parting, the ultimate waste.

The book of Wisdom says it best:

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Q: Wisdom 3:2-3

They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead; and their passing away was thought an affliction and their going forth from us, utter destruction.

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**SUDDENLY, WE REALIZE THAT
THEY ARE NOT DEAD BUT
VIVIDLY AND AWESOMELY
ALIVE . . . ALIVE NOW!**

What does this encounter of women and an angel mean to us now?

THAT THEY, AND EACH ONE OF US, WILL ALSO RISE IN JESUS AND BE UNITED TO US FOR ETERNAL GLORY!!!

THAT DEATH ITSELF IS DEAD!

AND LIFE IS SUPREME, ETERNAL AND GLORIOUS!!!!

III. PARTICIPATION

And at this point a FINAL

QUESTION, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, makes itself felt deep within our hearts, a burning, intense desire ...

WHAT MUST I DO TO BECOME PART OF THIS EVENT THAT CREATES A WHOLE NEW REALITY OF JOY FOR THE HUMAN BEING?

St. Paul is quick to answer our question:

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Q: Are you unaware that we who

were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

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BAPTISM IS THE BEGINNING OF THIS PARTICIPATION IN JESUS' VICTORY OVER DEATH!

BAPTISM IS THE ACT OF BECOMING AN ACTIVE AND REAL PART OF JESUS'

RESURRECTION TO GLORY!

But, what we often forget is that baptism is the beginning of THIS NEW LIFE, not its end!

Baptism not only a ceremony but a LIFE THAT MUST BE LIVED CONTINUOUSLY!

A profound devotion is given to us by the Church to remind us that WE ARE CONTINUOUSLY BAPTIZED INTO THE LIFE OF JESUS' RESURRECTION, HERE AND NOW, TO BE FULLY LIVED AND

CELEBRATED!

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EX: Holy Water

a. When we bless ourselves with Holy Water on entering and leaving a Church or our home or our room, we put ourselves again into the Baptismal Font and give our sworn word to live the GRACE OF OUR BAPTISM IN THE HERE AND NOW AND FOR EVER!

b. Holy Water is simply BAPTISMAL WATER and in anointing ourselves with this water while making the sign of the cross,

we commit our lives to
**PARTICIPATE IN JESUS' VICTORY
OVER ALL SIN AND DEATH!**

IV. AMEN!

In this Liturgy, we gather not only to celebrate the Baptism of our new brothers and sisters into our life of faith and love **BUT TO RENEW OUR OWN BAPTISM AND CONFIRM BOTH THEIR NEW BIRTH AND OUR LIVING WITH THEM THE LIFE OF JESUS.**

WE DO THIS WITH THE

WORD . . .

AMEN!

This word is an OATH, a PLEDGE, a GIVING OF ONESELF WITHOUT RESERVE OR CONDITION TO GOD'S LOVE FOR US AND OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER.

AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!

JESUS IS RISEN AND IN HIM WE SHALL NEVER DIE!!!

AMEN!!!

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