

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
April 5, 2015

John's gospel ends as it began, with the question: where does Jesus dwell?

Remember how immediately after his baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus noticed two of John's disciples following him. He said to them, "What are you looking for?" They replied, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" Jesus said to them, "Come, and you will see".

Now at the end after his death and burial, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb while it was still dark to visit Jesus' tomb. Seeing that the tomb was empty, she found Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

Peter and John ran to the tomb. Peter entered the tomb first and saw the burial cloths there, and the "cloth that had covered the head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place." John followed Peter into the tomb; he saw and believed. John the evangelist then adds that they didn't yet understand the Scriptures that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

Now perhaps the most important aspect of John's resurrection account for us lies in the statement "he saw and believed." John made it very clear in chapter 20 that coming to believe in the Risen Lord is the purpose and the point of the entire gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of [his] disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may [come to] believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name".

John wanted us to identify with the two disciples who asked Jesus, "Where are you staying?" He also wanted us to identify with the "beloved disciple" who ran to see

where Jesus was so that we, like him, would see and come to believe.

The "sign" that leads the beloved disciple to believe is the cloth that had covered the head of Jesus. John is the only evangelist who mentions this cloth so we know it probably played a significant role in John's belief.

Was the head cloth that the beloved disciple saw proof that Jesus rose from the dead and had ascended to the Father in glory? Of course not. However, for him it was a sign like the other signs of the gospel that could lead to belief. A sign that lead to faith or to a deeper faith in the Risen Lord that was soon to spread throughout the world.

We of course know the rest of the story, and Jesus also charges us with proclaiming the good news to everyone he places in our lives. We can't call ourselves Catholic and be fearful and remain silent, for the reality of the risen Jesus compels us to witness not just with our words, but also with our lives.

Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical, *The Joy of the Gospel* that "Moved by Jesus' example, we are to enter fully into the fabric of society, sharing the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually in their needs, rejoicing with those who rejoice, weeping with those who weep; arm in arm with others, we are committed to building a new world.

"But, we do so not from a sense of obligation, not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings joy and gives meaning to our lives".

And so, on this feast of Easter, let's resolve to be the light that dispels another person's darkness and to share that life that our resurrected Lord has secured for every one of us.