

Easter Sunday

On Sunday morning the women went to the tomb to pay their last tribute to a dead body. The disciples thought that everything had finished in tragedy. None of them was ready to see an empty tomb and hear the angel's message, why do you seek the living among the dead? Mary Magdalene is the first to report the shocking news of the empty tomb! She assumed that Jesus' body had been stolen! She was not yet prepared to meet the risen Lord who would reveal himself to her while she later remained in the garden near the tomb. What is the significance of the stone being rolled away? It would have taken several people to roll away such a stone. And besides, the sealed tomb had been guarded by soldiers! This is clearly the first sign of the resurrection. It is significant that the disciples had to first deal with the empty tomb before they could come to grips with the fact that scripture had foretold that Jesus would die for our sins and then rise triumphant. They disbelieved until they saw the empty tomb.

John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, wrote his gospel as an eye-witness of the Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us, and who died and rose for our salvation. John was the only apostle, along with the women who stood with Jesus at the foot of the cross, who witnessed Jesus' death on Good Friday. Now John is the first of the apostles, along with Peter, to see the empty tomb on Easter Sunday morning, after the women returned and gave their report. When John saw the empty tomb he must have recalled Jesus' prophecy that he would rise again after three days. Through the gift of faith John realized that no tomb on earth could contain the Lord and giver of life. John in his first epistle testifies: What we have seen, heard, and touched we proclaim as the word of life which existed "from the beginning." This "word of life" is Jesus the word incarnate, but also Jesus as the word

announced by the prophets and Jesus the word now preached throughout the Christian church for all ages to come.

One thing is certain, if Jesus had not risen from the dead and appeared to his disciples, we would never have heard of him. Nothing else could have changed sad and hopeless men and women into people radiant with joy and courage. The reality of the resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord gives us “eyes of faith” to know him and the power of his resurrection. The greatest joy we can have is to encounter the living Lord and to know him personally.