

# Sunday, April 21, 2019

## Easter Sunday

### Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

#### Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Acts 10:34, 37-43

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

Responsorial: Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Gospel: John 20:1-9

## Running to Jesus, The Risen Lord

*They both ran. (John 20:4)*

When we are sick, we run to the doctor's. When there is a big sale at a store, we run to the shopping mall. When we see a little toddler fall down, we run to comfort him and pick him up. Today's Gospel tells us that Peter and John ran as well. They ran to the tomb on Easter Sunday, once Mary Magdalene told them that Jesus' body was missing.

It seems that a lot of people ran to find Jesus. There was a Roman centurion, a demon-possessed man, and a woman with a blood disorder. There was a fellow with leprosy, a woman known as a sinner, and the tax collector Zacchaeus. The mother of a possessed child, a wealthy young man, and blind Bartimaeus also ran to him. And let's not forget all the people who crowded around Jesus at every town he visited.

Jesus once said, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). He also said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (11:28). And "I will not reject anyone who comes to me" (John 6:37). It's an open invitation. There are no conditions, no strings attached. Jesus wants everyone to come to him, just as they are.

Today, as you celebrate the most important event in human history, accept Jesus' invitation. Run to him. Don't hold back because you think you're not worthy. Run to receive his overflowing mercy. Run to receive him as the Living Bread at Mass.

When Peter and John ran to the tomb, their hearts were filled with hope. On this Easter Sunday, let's also place our hope in the One who "is seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). When we run to Jesus, we will find him. He has risen. He is alive. He wants to help us just as much as he helped all those people who ran to him.

*"Lord, I believe that you have risen. Thank you for calling me to your side!"*

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**Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion:**

1. In the first reading, Peter witnesses to Jesus' passion and resurrection: *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day.* He also describes his personal call by God to be a witness for Christ: *He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.*
  - Why do you think it was necessary that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power"? Do you believe that through faith, Baptism, and Confirmation, you also have been anointed with the Holy Spirit and power?
  - How was Peter's witness to Christ's passion and resurrection related to his belief that he was called to *preach to the people and testify*? How would you describe your own personal call by God to be a witness for Christ to others?
2. The responsorial psalm opens with these words: *Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever... The right hand of the LORD has struck with power; the right hand of the LORD is exalted. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.* The response to the psalm is *This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.*
  - How would you describe the many reasons the psalmist gives for giving thanks to the Lord? How do they compare to your own reasons?
  - How would you describe what the *works of the Lord* are? How do you "declare" them? What impact did it have on others when you have done this?
  - What is it about your faith in Christ that causes you to "rejoice and be glad"?
3. The second reading begins with these words: *If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.*
  - What do you think is the meaning of these words? *If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.*
  - What about the meaning of the words that follow? *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.*
  - How can you allow the truth of these words to impact how you live out your day, especially when faced with temptations or difficult circumstances?
4. The Gospel reading describes what happened after Simon Peter and John ran to the empty tomb. It says that Simon Peter *went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.*
  - Why do you think John the apostle *saw and believed*, when he saw the empty tomb and the burial cloths, even though he *did not yet understand the Scriptures that he had to rise from the dead*?
  - The "empty tomb" would eventually have a profound impact on both Peter and John's lives. How has the truth of the empty tomb, Christ's resurrection, and the promise of eternal life affected how you live as a Catholic Christian?
  - What have you "seen" during this Lenten season and Holy Week that has helped to deepen your faith in Jesus and his resurrection from the dead?
5. The meditation is a reflection on the Gospel reading and these words from the reading: *They both ran* (John 20:4). It includes these words: *Today, as you celebrate the most important event in human history, accept Jesus' invitation. Run to him. Don't hold back because you think you're not worthy. Run to receive his overflowing mercy. Run to receive him as the Living Bread at Mass. When Peter and John ran to the tomb, their hearts were filled with hope. On this Easter Sunday, let's also place our hope in the One who "is seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). When we run to Jesus, we will find him. He has risen. He is alive. He wants to help us just as much as he helped all those people who ran to him.*
  - What do these words from the meditation mean to you?
  - When you do *accept Jesus' invitation* and *Run to him*, why is it important that you *Don't hold back because you think you're not worthy. Run to receive his overflowing mercy. Run to receive him as the Living Bread at Mass*?
  - What new steps can you take to apply these words from the meditation in a deeper way?

**Take some time now to pray and thank the Lord Jesus for the grace to believe in the good news of his death and resurrection, and his call to you to be his disciple. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.**

***"Lord, I believe that you have risen. Thank you for calling me to your side!"***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization ([www.christlife.org](http://www.christlife.org)), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal ([www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org)), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of The Word Among Us ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry. He can be contacted at [mblumberg@wau.org](mailto:mblumberg@wau.org) or [mblumberg@aol.com](mailto:mblumberg@aol.com).]