

## Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, Apr 21st 2014

Yesterday was the glorious feast of Easter joy. Today the churches are quieter as we begin to return to “normal” life. But what can be “normal” after Easter? Can we be the same people we were before the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus?

In today's first reading, we see Peter as anything but the fearful disciple we have seen in the past. In a loud, clear voice he stands in the midst of a crowd and proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah. This “new” Peter speaks in a different and more confident voice than the one who had huddled in terror in the locked upper room after the crucifixion. Now he says he can “speak confidently” and, quoting David, says his heart is glad and his tongue has rejoiced. He has been changed.

Have we been moved that dramatically by the events of the past week? Are we as courageous as Peter? Perhaps we are more like the women hurrying away from the tomb, half-overjoyed and half-fearful. Yes, there is good news, wonderful news ... but can we allow ourselves to believe it? Can it really be true?

Jesus gives us the answer as he meets the women rushing from the tomb. His first words to them – and us – are “Peace!” and then “Do not be afraid!” Jesus wants us first to be at peace, to feel the love and redemption he offers us. Yes, it is true and now, as believers, witnesses to this miracle of love, we are asked by Jesus to “go and carry the news...”

Today we are still carried along on the joy of Holy Week and Easter Sunday liturgies. We may feel the call of Jesus in our lives asking us to spread the good news to our brothers and sisters. Today we have the courage, the energy and the joy inside. But can this last? We remember Peter's fear and know of our own, so deeply entrenched. It doesn't matter. We will, at times, forget, fall asleep, deny Jesus and run away fearfully, forgetting the joy. But always, always he will be there to meet us with his arms gently open, his eyes filled with love.

“Peace!” he says, greeting us with the understanding of someone who truly knows us and our faults – and loves us anyway. “Don't be afraid.”

This, then is the most precious gift of the resurrection.

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