

“He is not Here”

Some years ago, I visited the Holy Land and one stand out moment was the Shrine of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Pilgrims from all over the world visit an empty tomb, which bears a note at its entrance stating: “He is not here.” Jesus Christ, who was once buried here, rose from the dead, leaving an empty tomb, as he had told his disciples he would.

Easter is the most important feast in the Church Calendar. Easter means the feast of fresh flowers. It falls towards the end of Spring when new life is in full bloom again after a hard and cold winter. The fields and hedgerows are brimming over with new life. Easter is the celebration of new life in the Risen Lord. It is the feast of hope.



The empty tomb and the resurrection are Good News but it is painful because it involves death. We’re called to die to sin, die to self, even die to our dreams so that God can do what He wants to do with our lives. Resurrection is about seeing the world in a new way. Early on that first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene did not find what she was looking for—the dead body of Jesus. But she found something better than she could have imagined: the Risen Jesus.

Sometimes what we think we want the most is not granted to us. Instead, we get an experience of God’s new ways of working in the world. That’s the power of the Resurrection. We must spread the news when those moments come, just as Mary Magdalene did: We have seen the Lord!

Easter, the feast of the Resurrection, gives us the positive message that we are people of the Resurrection. This means we are not supposed to be buried in the tomb of our sins, evil habits and dangerous addictions. This Good News means that no tomb can hold us down anymore—not the tomb of despair, not the tomb of discouragement or the tomb of doubt, nor that of death. Instead, we are expected to live a joyful and peaceful life, constantly experiencing the Risen Lord’s real presence in all our lives.

His tomb was empty. “He is not here.” We are an Easter people, so let us celebrate Easter with pride, freedom and rejoicing. “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Easter reflections by Fr John McEvoy on Scripture passages

Acts 10: 34, 37-43; Col 3:1-4; Jn 20: 1-9

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