

# SPIRITUAL LIFE

## Sundays

By: Mary Anne Sevilla, OSC

Alleluia! Happy Easter! Let it all ring out now, Alleluia!

Easter Day is the most splendid and exuberant celebration of the Church. For this is the Sunday of Sundays, the day of Resurrection of Christ, the center and foundation of our faith. As St. Paul said, "If Christ has not risen, your faith is vain." Thus Easter is the pinnacle of all feasts of the Church year 00 which began with Advent, or the expectation of the coming of the Messiah, sent by God for our Salvation. The culmination of the entire liturgy is the Easter feast. We attend Mass on Easter Day to join millions of Christians all over the world, to join these living and dead, in joyous affirmation of our redemption through the love of Christ. We declare our hope of salvation, and our faith in the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Although the Easter Vigil and Mass fulfill the obligation for Easter Sunday Mass, the Easter Day celebration is a highlight that we should try not to miss.

-Every Sunday is a celebration of the Lord's Resurrection. Every celebration of Mass commemorates all the Easter mysteries, the Lord's Supper which Christ instituted the Eucharist, and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and his Resurrection, the historic events on which our faith is based. Every Sunday then, is a little Easter.

-Every Sunday is Christ's feast day. This is why the Sunday's during Lent are excluded from the forty days of penance; why no saint's feast days on the Church's calendar are celebrated on Sunday; and, likewise, why no funeral Masses may be conducted on the Lord's Day.

-Our beloved Pope John Paul II, wanting to emphasize the importance of Sundays, wrote an Apostolic Letter "Dies Domini" on which he says: "Sunday is a day which is at the very heart of the Christian life. From the beginning of my Pontificate, I have not ceased to repeat: 'Do not be afraid! Open, open wide the doors to Christ!' in the same way, today I would strongly urge everyone to rediscover Sunday: Do not be afraid to give your time to Christ! Yes, let us open our time to Christ, that he may cast light upon and give it direction. He is the One who knows the secret of time and the secret of eternity, and he gives us "his day" as an ever new gift of his love. The rediscovery of this day is a grace which we must implore, not only so that we may live the demands of faith to the full, but also so that we may respond concretely to the deepest human yearnings. Time given to Christ is never time lost, but is rather time gained, so that our relationships and indeed our whole life may become more profoundly human."

-“Sunday,” according to Pope John Paul “is not only the first day, it is also ‘the eighth day’, set within the sevenfold succession of days in a unique and transcendent position which

evokes not only the beginning of time but also its end in the ‘the age to come.’ Sunday symbolizes that truly singular day which will follow the present time, the day without end which will know neither evening nor morning, the imperishable age which will never grow old. In celebrating Sunday, both the first and the eighth day, the Christian is led towards the goals of eternal life.”

-Sunday, the day of light, is also called the day of “fire,” in reference to the Holy Spirit. The outpouring of the Spirit was the great gift of the Risen Lord to us. It was again Sunday when, fifty days after the Resurrection, the Spirit descended in power, as a ‘mighty wind’ and ‘fire.’ The ‘weekly Easter’ thus becomes, in a sense, the ‘weekly Pentecost’, when we receive the life-giving breath of His Spirit. (cg #28 Dies Domino)

-In the words of our beloved Pope: “If after six days of work-reduced to five for many – people look for time to relax and to pay more attention to other aspects of their lives, this corresponds to an authentic need which is in full harmony with the vision of the Gospel message. Even the beauties of nature can be rediscovered and enjoyed to the full. Sunday becomes a moment when people can look anew upon the wonders of nature, the day on which man is at peace with God, with himself and with others.” (DD #67)

-“Sunday should also give the faithful and opportunity to devote themselves to works of mercy, charity and apostolate,” continues the Pope. “Ever since Apostolic times, the Sunday gathering has in fact been for Christians a moment of fraternal sharing with the very poor. If Sunday is a day of joy, Christians should declare by their actual behavior that we cannot be happy ‘on our own’. They look around to find people who may need their help. It may be that in their neighborhood or among those they know there are sick people, elderly people, children or immigrants who precisely on Sundays feel more keenly their isolation, needs and suffering. To experience the joy of the Risen Lord deep within is to share fully the love which pulses in his heart: there is not joy without love!” (cf DD#69,70,72)

-Sustaining Christian life as it does, Sunday has the addition value of being a testimony and a proclamation. As a day of prayer, communion and joy, we go forward from Sunday to Sunday towards the unending Sunday of the heavenly Jerusalem.” (DD#84) So, enjoy your Sundays. Remember, Sunday is day of rest, too. Don't pack it in with too many meetings and commitments. Relax with the Lord and Happy Easter!

Adapted from ‘Sunday Examiner’

## READINGS OF THE WEEK

Acts 10:34-43

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

April 20, 2014

## 墳 墓 空 了

蔡 惠 民 神 父

中世紀的時候，有一位修女自稱曾看見耶穌顯現，消息很快便傳到主教那裡。於是主教約見修女，希望了解一下。他問道：「當耶穌向你顯現時，你有沒有跟他交談？」修女清楚地回答：「有！」為求找出真相，主教繼續說：「如果再看見耶穌，請你問祂一下：我當主教以前，最大的罪過是甚麼？」主教知道只有天主和他的告解神師知道答案。大概三個月後，修女要求約見主教。當她進來時，主教便問：「你是否又看見耶穌？」「是的！」修女回答。「那麼，你有沒有問祂有關我的罪過？」「有啊！」「祂說甚麼呢？」她微笑地回答：「祂說甚麼都記不起了。」

雖然，耶穌生前對跟隨祂的人多次談及自己的死亡和復活，他們都無法理解和接受事件的發生。按馬爾谷的記載，門徒都因耶穌的被捕而四散，只留下祂一人獨自完成苦路。若望亦指出在耶穌復活那一天，門徒因怕猶太人而把自己關起來。同樣，在今天發現空墳的敘述中，瑪利亞瑪達肋納、伯多祿和耶穌所愛的門徒，起初都顯得大惑不解。

為瑪達肋納來說，石頭從墳墓移開，唯一合理的解釋是有人盜墓，把耶穌的屍體搬走了。當伯多祿和耶穌所愛的門徒接到報告，跑到墳墓看個究竟時，他們發現墳墓不單是空了，裡面還有殮布和耶穌頭上的那塊汗巾，整齊地放在不同的位置。如果耶穌的屍體被人搬走了，為甚麼他們要把殮布和汗巾除掉？按常理推測，有殮布裹著的屍體更方便運送。再者，如果盜墓者的目標是耶穌的屍體，這具屍體有甚麼商業價值呢？一連串的疑點要求門徒為空墳尋找更合理的答案。

原來，沒有人目擊耶穌復活一刻的發生，但新約卻保留了很多與復活基督相遇的見證。歸納這些見證，我們可以肯定，復活是生命的延續，不過，卻是一個完全轉化的延續。所以，用「起死回生」來想像復活不足夠，因為復活不單是同一軀體的再生。同樣，用「起死回生」去描繪復活也不恰當，因為復活不是一個歷史經驗無法捉摸的靈幻空間。保祿曾經以播種為喻，指出人死後的身體，就和種子長出新芽一樣，一方面是同一的種子，但另一方面，卻是不同的形體(格前十五 36-38)。

瑪達肋納起初未能明白復活，因為她仍停留在「起死回生」的思維，希望在墳墓中尋找耶穌的過去。當復活的基督以一個轉化的面孔出現在她面前時，她還以為是個園丁。隨後，耶穌呼喚她的名字，勾起她一連串過去生活的回憶時，她才認出眼前復活的基督，就是昔日的恩師。

所以，復活不單證明了耶穌是天主子，復活也把世界變成了一座空墳，一道通往永生的跳板。今天空墳的故事就是邀請我們在生命的歷程中與復活的基督相遇。當我們願意放下「起死回生」的執著，或「出死入生」的幻想時，我們便會赫然發現，復活的基督正佇立在我們生活的每一片斷，特別在哀傷、失落、痛苦、內疚、無能為力……的時刻。一如伯多祿以復活的眼光回顧耶穌的一生時，發現「天主怎樣以聖神和德能傳了納匝肋的耶穌，使他巡行各處，施恩行善，治好一切受魔鬼壓制的人，因為天主與祂同在一起。」

同樣，保祿勸勉我們，一個在主內重生的人，就是一座叫人產生信仰的空墳，因為在洗禮中，我們已經與基督同死同埋。在基督內，過去的忿怒、暴戾、惡意、詬罵、已被寬恕、治愈，並得已成為新的創造。讓我們此刻細心反思，堵塞我們心靈的石頭是否已經移開，以致人們進入裡面時，一「看見」便會「相信」。

「摘自公教報」