

## Homily For Tuesday of the First Week of Easter - Year I

### St Peter's 8:30am Mass - April 6, 2021

**Acts 2:36-41** "Cut to the heart, they asked: What should we do? Repent, be baptized... be saved."

**Psalm 33:4-5,18-22** "The eye of the Lord is on those who hope in his love to save their souls."

**John 20:11-18** "Woman, why are you weeping? I am ascending to my God and your God."

### From Weeping To Seeing

#### Introduction

We are now in the third day of the octave of Easter. That's eight days of one long Easter day. It's like one continuous solemnity, which is an occasion for joy. Jesus has gone through death and has come out the other side. It's not like Lazarus, who was returned to his original life. This is a new life. It is a resurrected life. This is what makes the Christian hope unique. Right now, most of the world is desperately trying to get back the life that has been put on hold. But we know there is a new life that does not depend on improving the circumstances around us. We speak the truth that Jesus has conquered sickness and death in a way that no one had done before or could do. We are called and challenged and invited to live that new life today.

#### Weeping

But we are also with Mary Magdalene, who is weeping at the tomb. She had a deep devotion to Jesus since he had saved her from demonic possession. She is overwhelmed by losing him a second time. She was at the cross. She saw his wounds and his suffering and the hatred of the world directed at him. She heard his last words and his last breath. Now she has lost his body and cannot even pay her respects.

Moving to Peter for a moment, do you remember when he had wept. Except his tears were of bitterness, when the cock crowed and he felt the full weight of his betrayal of his denial of the Lord. But the Book of Acts begins with Peter speaking with power to a large crowd at Pentecost. That fifty days since Jesus was crucified

had seen him believe, receive mercy and the affirmation of Jesus' love, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. There were no more tears for him. There was only conviction and power. "Know with certainty (he tells the crowd) that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." Wow, now that's a motivational speech. It cuts them to the heart so that they want to repent like Peter and be reconciled.

John the Baptist had called for repentance and baptism. But he had also promised that one would come after him who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. That's the fire with which our first pope spoke on that first Christian Pentecost.

### **The Meaning of the Garden**

Before Peter got to that place, there was the experience of the empty tomb. Now we go back to this strange conversation in the garden outside the empty tomb of Jesus. Mary's tears kept her from seeing Jesus for who he is. Her broken heart kept her from being able to hear his familiar voice. This conversation reminded me of a phone conversation I had years ago with my very deaf Grandmother. She was living with my parents at the time. I called to talk to them and she answered. I'm not sure why. It was a conversation destined to go nowhere. She said hello. I said Hi Grandma, it's Stephen. She said, Steve's not here. I said, no it's Steve calling. She said again, Steve's not here. That went on for awhile. Finally, I said, ok I'll call back and hung up. Now that I think of it, my grandmother's name was Mary. If I had just done what Jesus did and called her by name, maybe she would have recognized me. Of course, no one ever calls a grandmother by her first name.

But Jesus had the kind of relationship with Mary that he has with all of us. It is very personal. He knows us by name because we belong to him as sheep to a shepherd but, even more, as brothers and sisters. Her crying ends when she hears her name called with that special love.

Mary saw two angels and Jesus in a garden. She was wrong about Jesus being a gardener. But, as Sacred Scripture often does for us, it reveals the truth in what is

not seen with the eyes. Mary is by a tomb in a garden with Jesus, who created, or planted, the first garden. She is with the original gardener. In another sense, she is also with the new Adam, who perfects the garden that the first Adam had tainted by his disobedience. So this garden is the place from which the new garden grows. Mary is more correct than she knows.

Jesus repeats the same question the angels in the tomb pose to Mary: Why are you weeping? It sounds like a rebuke, like what's wrong with your perception. But I think that is unlikely. Mary, the mother of Jesus was given the honour of bringing the saviour into the world. Mary Magdalene is now given the honour of being the first to announce the good news to the Apostles. Peter and John had already been at the tomb before Mary. But John tells us they just went home after that. Mary went to all of them with the announcement: "I have seen the Lord" This is not simply a relating of the facts. It is a proclamation, a witness of a life transformed by the resurrected Lord. She is the first to be so transformed.

### **Call To Action**

We must also now dry our tears of disappointment and discouragement. We must now see the risen Lord through our tears. There is a garden in our hearts that needs to grow. That's where it begins. Let us hear the Lord of life call our names. Let us not be afraid to say to someone we will meet: I have seen the Lord. He is the one who calls us by our name. Let us go from weeping to seeing.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *The water of wisdom will raise them up for ever, alleluia.*

**Acts:** *On the day of Pentecost, Peter addressed the crowd: Know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified. The people were cut to the heart and said: Brothers, what should we do? Peter said: Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven ... Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. That day about three thousand were added to their number.*

**Psalm:** *Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who hope in his steadfast love, to deliver their souls from death.*

**John:** *Mary Magdalene stood weeping outside the tomb. In the tomb she two angels in white, where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her: Woman why are you weeping? She said to them: They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him. When she turned, she saw Jesus standing there, but did not know that it was him. Jesus said to her: Why are you weeping? Supposing him to be the gardener she said: Tell me where you have laid him. Jesus said to her: Mary! Mary said: Rabbouni. Jesus said: Go tell my brothers I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Mary announced to the disciples: I have seen the Lord!*