

# Go Forth...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

## MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

# THE EMPTY TOMB



### SUNDAY READINGS:

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

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

Colossians 3:1-4

John 20:1-9

### COMMENTARY

“They have taken the Lord...and we don’t know where they put him.” As I reflected on the readings and especially on the Gospel, these words burned in my heart. A second reading of this Gospel only caused these words to resonate even more with me. I have probably mentioned this in other reflections, but it seems so

appropriate for our times today. We have spent the past 50 days listening to the prophets who call our attention to how we are living and what God expects of us. Our Lenten practices have hopefully made clear to each one of us what needs to change in our lives, in my life so that God’s kingdom can become a reality here on earth. The Kingdom is already near you!

Our desire to be messengers and prophets of God’s Reign makes us run to find Jesus, but often he is not where we are looking because we look in the wrong places. We might think that Jesus is not where there is violence, or injustices, or egoism, or destruction of life, human, animal or all of creation. And yet paradoxically it is exactly amid these realities that we are missioned to bring the Good News. We cannot remain paralyzed looking into the tomb wishing for a change. We must run to where we can shout out God’s love, mercy and thus transform our world. We cannot lose hope that the power of God’s Spirit will be with us at all moments.

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Perhaps we don't understand yet what is really our role in this mission of transformation, as the apostles did not understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead. But that cannot hold us back. St. Francis of Assisi did not understand fully his mission as he began his journey of transformation, but he never became stagnant. He moved ahead and created another action to discover what God really wanted of him. As we know, with the help of the Holy Spirit the disciples of Jesus were able to spread the Gospel values to far off places.

This is why we sing our Alleluias! We have searched for God. We have seen the Risen Christ. We have the power of the Spirit wherever we are. Not all are called to places of national or international circles for very serious decision making. Most of us are called to ordinary places and situations that are no less important than those mentioned above. Today a young man jumped in a lake to save a father and his daughter from drowning. Alleluia! Today someone donated 10 cases of water for the families who lost everything because of a tornado. Alleluia! Today an elderly couple shared their house with a young mother and her child as ICE walked the streets. Alleluia! Today a teacher reached out to her student with patience until he could grasp the meaning. Alleluia! Christ has risen in all these situations and in many more. You are the Christ for many people. We speak in Jesus' name because he was not in the tomb anymore, we found him alive in others. Jesus has risen. **Alleluia!**

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## NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

**First Reading – Acts 10:34a, 37-43:** Peter preaches about Jesus of Nazareth who was anointed by God “with the Holy Spirit and power.” He continues by telling the story of how Jesus became our Savior and then how Peter and the apostles were commissioned as witnesses. For these reasons, Peter preaches to spread the Good News to all who will listen. We are today’s preachers who do so by word and example.

**Responsorial Psalm – Psalm: 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23:** Alleluia, indeed! All that we have and all that we are is due to God’s love and mercy. Jesus has opened the gates of heaven; the stone has been rolled away. No one will be excluded if she or he lives the Gospel values that Jesus lived for and taught us.

**Second Reading – Colossians 3:1-4:** This reading must be read with wisdom. This earth is where we are missioned so that the kingdom of God can be a reality. But thinking of what exists for those who believe, allows us to focus on the eternal reality which is life in glory with Jesus Christ.

**Gospel – John 20:1-9:** What a beautiful Easter story! Mary of Magdala, a woman, is the first to seek Jesus after his death according to St. John. It was still dark: not only the natural darkness of early morning, but the darkness of not knowing where the Body of Jesus was. The tomb is empty so she must tell those who were Jesus’ friends and followers. And even though they did not have an explication for the risen Christ, they believed. What a challenge for us. After so many centuries we do believe that Jesus rose from the dead; but is our faith strong enough that we can accept the journey of the Sacred Triduum in our lives?

Notes and Commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, OSF. Sr. Nancy is a past-president of the USCMA and currently serves in a small rural parish. She also serves her religious community on various committees. She is a spiritual director and translates for other groups in Portuguese.

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