

In any Catholic congregation on Easter Sunday morning, one is liable to find three categories of people: those who are here *bursting* with joy at the Resurrection of Christ; those who are here out of a sense of obligation *because* of the Resurrection of Christ; and finally, those who are here to be polite to *someone else* who is honouring the Resurrection of Christ. These assessments are meant neither to be a judgement of character nor a criticism of motivation, but merely a statement of fact. What matters is that we are all here, and whether we realize it or not, we are impacted by Jesus rising simply through being here.

These three categories of this morning's Mass-goers actually correspond to three possible responses to Christ's Resurrection in general. In rising from the dead, Jesus transcended both space and time, totally entering into the past, present and future. Therefore, it can be said that one's response to the Resurrection is essentially the same as one's response to Jesus Himself. In an instance of providential brilliance, it would seem based upon the gospel passage which we have heard this morning that these three responses and their corresponding categories are clearly demonstrated by three different figures in the story. I suspect that in one of them, we each can find a kindred spirit.

I will review them in reverse order of the categories as I initially listed them, which means beginning with those whose personal faith may be weakest and are really here because of someone else. To you I recommend the leading lady of

this drama: St. Mary Magdalene. As she is portrayed in this story, she is somewhat of a pessimist. She jumps to conclusions- Jesus' body has been stolen- she is overwhelmed by sadness at it all, evidenced by her weeping; and even when Jesus stares her in the face, she is too preoccupied to recognize Him. If you happen to be one of those who have sincerely looked for Him but never seem to find Him, you are in good company! You may be here purely out of good will, but the thing about good will is that it's good! Weak faith is welcome here.

The second category of people are those who have enough faith to know that being here matters but the sense of obligation has not translated into privilege. To you I recommend the character of St. Peter, who required time and repeated attempts in firing up his faith. Like him, perhaps it takes you a while to comprehend or believe the ways of God; it's no coincidence that he arrived last to the empty tomb. Perhaps faith for you, as real as it is, is a genuine struggle; something like putting down an anchor in deep waters which always seems to take forever to find solid ground. Again, you are in good company- the company of a pope! Maybe being here is nothing more than an obligation to you, but honouring obligations keeps this world turning! Forced-faith is welcome here.

This leaves the third and final category of people: those whose faith in the Resurrection has them bursting with joy today. Next to the other two categories we just reviewed, this understandably sounds like "the right one", but anyone

who most closely associates with it is in grave danger of losing it if you think it has much to do with you. Your partner from the gospel is the Beloved Disciple, St. John. He demonstrates a very deferential faith, one which allows him to believe in the Resurrection instantaneously- *he saw and believed*- but in a truly humble manner. We see this in his silence, and by his restraint from running into the tomb before Peter, the rightful leader, had gotten there. St. John's faith is undoubtedly ideal, but it is a *gift* and not of his own doing. So, too, for any of you who find living by faith such a natural way of life. This gift must be a cause of tremendous gratitude on your part that God has so chosen to bestow it upon you.

In the final analysis, each of these three people was very different but they all held something eventually in common: an encounter with the Risen Christ. Whether we're sure we'll never find Him; we think He takes forever to show up; or, we seem to find Him everywhere; the Resurrection is for us all. And in each case- no one came to Him; He always comes to us first. Perhaps for those of us in the first category, the greatest reassurance is the fact that the pessimistic Mary Magdalene was the first to see Him in a privileged, private exchange. No matter where we fit into this trifold, the Risen Lord has advice for us: if you're lost, keep looking; if you're looking, keep waiting; and if you're secure, then hang on tight! One way or another, it is possible for all of us to someday be the proclaimers of Mary's earth shattering declaration: *I have seen the Lord*.