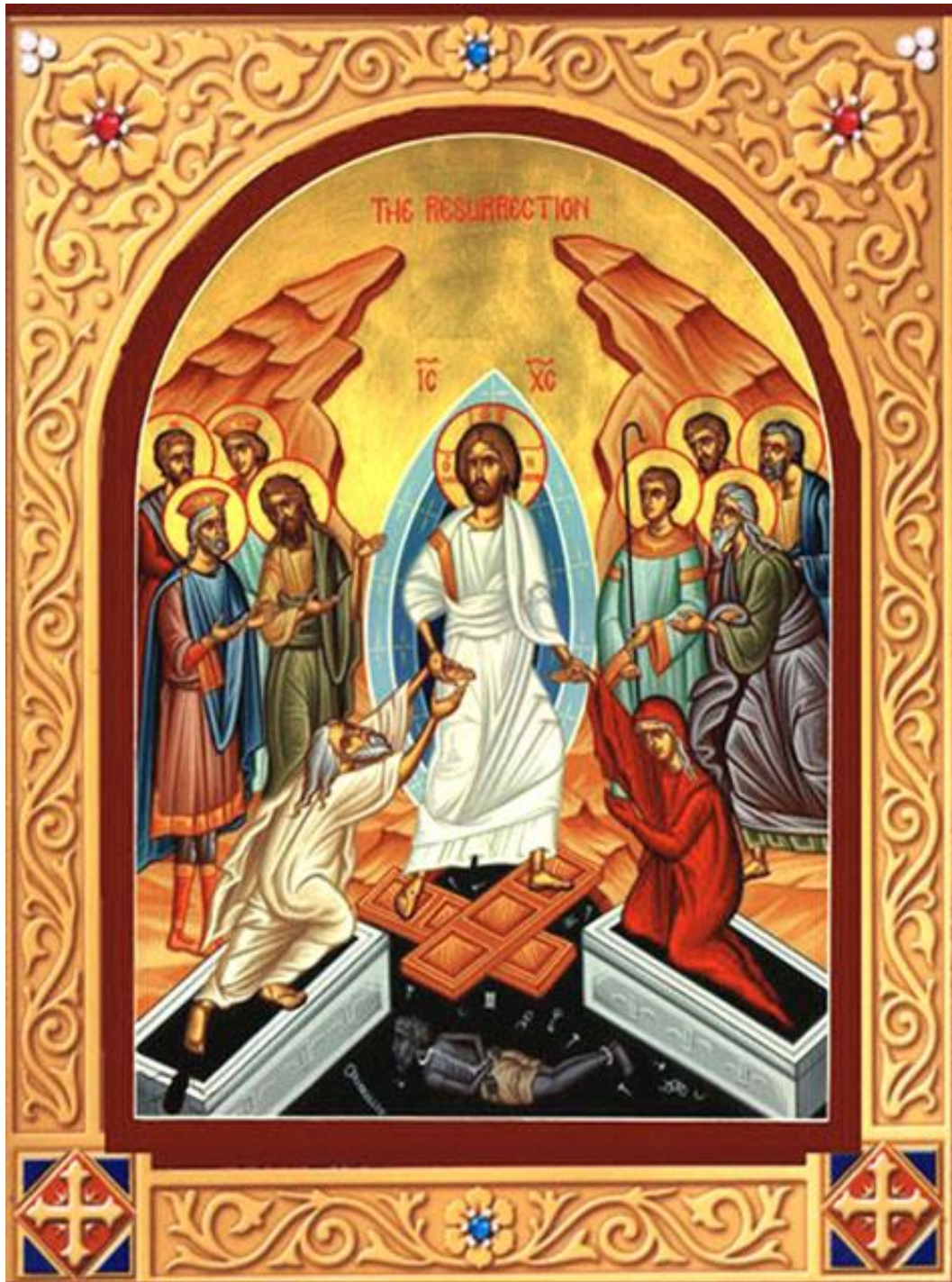


Lenten Scripture Study  
Final Session – The Resurrection





## Opening Prayer

Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

## Scripture John 20

### The Empty Tomb.\*

1 On the first day of the week,<sup>a</sup> Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark,\* and saw the stone removed from the tomb. <sup>b</sup>

2 So she ran\* and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

3\* So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.

4 They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first;

5 he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

6<sup>c</sup> When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths\* there,

7 and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.<sup>d</sup>

8 Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.

9\* <sup>e</sup> For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

10 Then the disciples returned home.

### The Appearance to Mary of Magdala.\*

11 But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping.<sup>f</sup> And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb

12 and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been.

13 And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken my Lord, and I don’t know where they laid him.”

14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus.<sup>g</sup>



15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?”<sup>h</sup> She thought it was the gardener and said to him, “Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni,”<sup>e</sup> which means Teacher.

17 Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me,<sup>\*</sup> for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”<sup>i</sup>

18 Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and what he told her.

### Appearance to the Disciples.<sup>\*</sup>

19 On the evening of that first day of the week,<sup>i</sup> when the doors were locked, where the disciples<sup>\*</sup> were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.<sup>\*</sup> The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.<sup>k</sup>

21<sup>-</sup> [Jesus] said to them again,<sup>l</sup> “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

22<sup>\*</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,<sup>m</sup> “Receive the holy Spirit.

23<sup>\*</sup> <sup>n</sup> Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

### Video Reflection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UlbmCOM8jFs>

## Proofs of the Resurrection

### I. THE HISTORICAL AND TRANSCENDENT EVENT

**639** The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a **real event**, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. . ." <sup>491</sup> The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus. <sup>492</sup>

#### The empty tomb

**640** "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." <sup>493</sup> The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. In itself it is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from the tomb could be explained otherwise. <sup>494</sup> Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women, and then with Peter. <sup>495</sup> The disciple "whom Jesus loved" affirmed that when he entered the empty tomb and discovered "the linen cloths lying there", "he saw and believed". <sup>496</sup> This suggests that he realized from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus. <sup>497</sup>

#### The appearances of the Risen One

**641** Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One. <sup>498</sup> Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves. <sup>499</sup> They were the next to whom Jesus appears: first Peter, then the Twelve. Peter had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers, <sup>500</sup> and so sees the Risen One before them; it is on the basis of his testimony that the community exclaims: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>501</sup>

**642** Everything that happened during those Paschal days involves each of the apostles - and Peter in particular - in the building of the new era begun on Easter morning. As

witnesses of the Risen One, they remain the foundation stones of his Church. The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of concrete men known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are the primary "witnesses to his Resurrection", but they are not the only ones - Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles.<sup>502</sup>

**643** Given all these testimonies, Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. It is clear from the facts that the disciples' faith was drastically put to the test by their master's Passion and death on the cross, which he had foretold.<sup>503</sup> The shock provoked by the Passion was so great that at least some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection. Far from showing us a community seized by a mystical exaltation, the Gospels present us with disciples demoralized ("looking sad"<sup>504</sup>) and frightened. For they had not believed the holy women returning from the tomb and had regarded their words as an "idle tale".<sup>505</sup> When Jesus reveals himself to the Eleven on Easter evening, "he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen."<sup>506</sup>

**644** Even when faced with the reality of the risen Jesus the disciples are still doubtful, so impossible did the thing seem: they thought they were seeing a ghost. "In their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering."<sup>507</sup> Thomas will also experience the test of doubt and St. Matthew relates that during the risen Lord's last appearance in Galilee "some doubted."<sup>508</sup> Therefore the hypothesis that the Resurrection was produced by the apostles' faith (or credulity) will not hold up. On the contrary their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus.

### **The condition of Christ's risen humanity**

**645** By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion.<sup>509</sup> Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm.<sup>510</sup> For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith.<sup>511</sup>

