

EASTER SUNDAY – YEAR B – OLPH – 2012
(Acts 10:34-43; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; John 20:01-18)

John's gospel ends as it began, with the question: **where does Jesus live?** Immediately after his baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan, Jesus noticed two of the Baptist's disciples following him. He said to them, "What are you looking for?" They replied, "Rabbi where do you live?" Jesus said to them, "Come and see" (1:38-39). Now at the end after his death and burial, **Mary of Magdala** goes to the tomb while it is still dark to visit this final earthly dwelling place of Jesus. Seeing that the tomb is empty, she finds Simon Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved, and says to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him."

The **climax of the Easter gospel** and the essence of its implications for us lie in the statement **"he saw and believed."** Coming to believe in the Risen Lord is the purpose and the point of the entire gospel: "Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name" (20:30-31). John wants us to identify with the two disciples of John the Baptist who ask Jesus, "Where are you staying?" He also wants us to identify with the "beloved disciple" who runs to see where Jesus is so that we, like him, will see and come to believe. The end of John's gospel begins our encounter with the Risen Lord.

The **"sign"** that leads the beloved disciple to believe is the cloth that had covered the head of Jesus. John is the only evangelist who mentions this cloth so we know it is significant in his narrative. The disciple upon seeing it very likely connects its meaning with the head cloth that Moses put aside when he ascended to speak face to face with God (Ex 34:33-35). Now the beloved disciple realizes with an intuitive leap of faith that Jesus, one greater than Moses, has ascended to be face to face with God in glory. Jesus no longer dwells in a tomb; he is alive and has gone to dwell with the Father as he had promised. In the following episodes John then relates how the community of disciples comes to believe that Jesus has also kept his promise to return to be with them through the Spirit (14:3-18). It is now possible through faith to dwell where Jesus

dwells, in God.

Was the **head cloth** that the beloved disciple saw proof that Jesus rose from the dead and had ascended to the Father in glory? Of course not. However, for him it was a sign like the other signs of the gospel that could lead to belief. A sign that leads to faith or to a deeper faith in the Risen Lord is unique for each of us: the head cloth led the beloved disciple to believe, but not Peter. For one of us, it may be hearing the gospel or homily on Easter Sunday. For another it may be the experience of seeing a spring flower or listening to Mahler's "Resurrection Symphony." What is needed on our part is unconditional commitment and openness in seeking truth: "Whoever lives the truth comes to the light..." (Jn 3:21).

Each of us is called to believe and to become a beloved disciple. Each of us is called to dwell where Jesus dwells and to have life in his name. For this gift of God's love we are grateful, and in this faith we can **celebrate Easter with hope and joy.**