

THE BULLETIN

“So the faith was planted: so it must be restored.”

Eight Pond Place, Oyster Bay, NY 11771

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The Wounds of the Risen Christ

Adapted from a sermon by The Most Rev. Clarence Kelly
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On Easter Sunday morning Mary Magdalene was the first person to go to the tomb. When she arrived, she discovered that the tomb was empty. The soldiers had already fled. She thought that the body of Jesus was stolen, so she went first to tell Peter and John. “They have taken the Lord from the tomb,” she told them, “and we do not know where they have laid Him,” (John 20:2). She then went back to the tomb and was joined by Mary, the mother of James, and Salome. They went into the tomb and they saw “...a young man sitting at the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were amazed” (Mark 16:5). The young man, who was an angel, instructed them to go and tell the disciples and Peter that Christ was risen. (Mark 16:7) But the Apostles found this story incredible. Luke says, “...they did not believe the women” (Luke 24:11).

Peter and John, however, did not completely discount what the women said. In fact, they were filled with a holy expectation, and leaving the others, they ran to the tomb to find out what had happened. John was a faster runner than Peter and arrived first, but out of respect for Peter, he waited for him before entering the empty tomb. When they entered, they saw the empty shroud, and lying apart from it, the other linen cloth which had covered the face of Our Lord. St. John believed in the resurrection, as he writes of himself: “Then the other disciple also went in, who had come first to the tomb. And he saw and believed” (John 20:8). But neither Peter nor John fully grasped the meaning of the death and resurrection of Our Lord, for St. John says that, “...they did not understand the Scripture, that

He must rise from the dead” (John 20:9). Both of them left and went home: “The disciples therefore went away again to their home” (John 20:10).

But Mary Magdalene had also returned to the tomb, and she did not leave. It is clear that even she did not believe, so she wept. As she wept, she again looked into the tomb, and there she saw two angels. They said to her, “Woman, why art thou weeping?” (John 20:13) She answered, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him” (John 20:13). At that moment she turned and she saw Our Lord outside, but “...she did not know that it was Jesus” (John 20:14). Our Lord said to her: “Woman, why art thou weeping? Whom dost thou seek?” (John 20:15) Mary thought Our Lord was the gardener. She said to Him, “If thou hast removed Him, tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away” (John 20:15). She then turned away from Our Lord to look around the garden for the Sacred Body. As she did this, Our Lord called her by her name: “Mary!” She turned back, recognizing Him, and exclaimed: “Rabboni! (that is to say, Master)” (John 20:16). She fell to the ground before Our Lord and tried to clasp His feet, but He said: “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren” (John 20:17). Mary went back to the Apostles again. It seems that at that time Peter and John were not with them. “And she announced to them: ‘I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me’” (John 20:18). But, says St. Mark, “And they, hearing that he was alive and had been seen by her, did not believe it” (Mark 16:11).