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Easter Day
by Fr. Jim Doran, OMV

The timid became courageous. Remember Joseph of Arimathea? He was a disciple of Jesus but in secret, for fear of the Jews. Then there was Nicodemus, the man who at first came to Jesus at night because he did not wish to be seen.

Well, these men who were previously fearful now boldly confess themselves as Disciples of Christ, not only with words but with action. They attend to His body with exquisite refinement and generosity. Joseph of Arimathea got permission from Pilate to collect the body. That had to take guts. He might have been killed on the spot by the Romans or the Jews. But he did it.

And Nicodemus did us a big favor. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds of it.

Myrrh is a very expensive aromatic resin and aloe juice is extracted from the leaves of the aloe plant. They were used in the expression of veneration for the dead.

The Navarre Bible commentary says, “After piously taking our Lord’s body down from the cross, they…perfumed it and wrapped it in a linen cloth, covering the head with a sudarium or napkin. But because of the Sabbath rest, they were unable to anoint the body with balsam, which the women planned to do once the Sabbath rest was past.”

Jesus, in fact, praised Mary, sister of Lazarus for anointing him at Bethany and foretold in a veiled way that his body would not be embalmed. There would not be time. This detail of the myrrh is important. It would make the linens stick to the body.

When she discovered the empty tomb, Mary Magdalene said, “they have taken the Lord away and we don’t know where they have put Him.” Peter and John came running, noticed the linens and knew that no thief had done this. If thieves had taken Him, they would not have bothered to pull the linens off Him. That would have been too much trouble in a hurry and in the dark.

They would not take the trouble to roll up the head cloth and put it in a place by itself. They would have taken Him away as He was. Remember when Lazarus was dead in the tomb, Jesus cried out, “Lazarus, come forth”? The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages. And his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said, “untie him and let him go.” Lazarus couldn’t do it by himself.

The disciples saw and believed. Remember that they did not yet understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.

St. Augustine says, “The Apostles had heard Jesus predict his death and Resurrection time and again, but they were so accustomed to hear parables from Him, that they took this for a parable and thought He meant something else.”

Now it dawns on John. Jesus really rose from the dead. He must have felt a comforting presence then, knowing that Jesus was not dead. The disciples did not look for Him; they went back to their homes. Jesus is in control of the situation. He will come and find us.

Mary Magdalene kept searching and weeping. And Jesus met her and consoled her.

He comes to us, too, in the Sacraments. Our Savior promised, “He who eats my Body and drinks My Blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.” Jn 6:54

I conclude with a quote from Saint Pius X. He wrote in his catechism “just as Jesus Christ through His resurrection began a new and immortal and heavenly life, so must we begin a new life according to the Spirit, once and for all renouncing sin and everything that leads us to sin, loving only God and everything that leads to God.”
Fr. Bruno Lanteri (1759-1830)

The Founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.

Declared “Venerable” - the first step to Sainthood.

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The US Province of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary is dedicated to St. Ignatius of Loyola, and includes communities in Massachusetts, Illinois, Colorado, California and the Philippines.

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The OMV motto, “Mariam Cogita, Mariam Invoca” “Think of Mary, Call on Mary” is taken from a homily by St. Bernard.