

**Easter Day 2024**  
**Sermon – Saint Joseph Parish**  
**Father Craig Looney**  
***St. John 20.1-10***

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What's next? We asked ourselves that question at last night's Vigil.

It's now early on the first Easter Sunday morning...still dark...and Mary Magdalene walks solemnly to Jesus' grave. What was she thinking on the short walk to the cemetery? Imagine her surprise when she finds the grave open. And where is the body of Jesus.

The Gospel tells us she ran back to where Peter and the other disciples were staying...probably the same Upper Room where the Last Supper took place. The Gospels really come to life when we place ourselves in the middle of the action. Let's imagine for the moment we are there with the disciples, waiting for what's next.

Not wanting to wait around...we run with Peter and John to the empty grave. John identifies himself as the disciple Jesus loved. Jesus loved all his disciples. But only John was there at the foot of the cross on the first Good Friday. Now John wants everyone to know he outran Peter to the grave.

What do we see when we get to Jesus' grave? We see an empty grave. We sense the shock and fear Peter and John must have had at finding the grave empty. The Gospel tells us Peter and John believed.

They believed Mary Magdalene told them the truth...the body of Jesus was not in the grave. They didn't believe Jesus had risen from the dead...at least not yet. And so everyone went home confused by what they had just seen.

We do have a distinct advantage over the disciples. We know what happens next. We believe in the Resurrection not because of the empty grave. We believe Jesus rose from the dead because of the eyewitness testimonies of his friends who saw him.

We leave the disciples in the Upper Room to think about everything they saw and heard the first Holy Week. Soon Jesus will appear to his friends who were hiding in fear behind a closed and locked door. He would say to them, "I've come back, just like I said I would." And their fear would disappear.

The darkness and sorrow we felt on Good Friday has been replaced by joy and happiness. Christ the Light of the World has returned. Sin and death has been conquered once and for all time.

The story of the Resurrection of Jesus doesn't end today...it has just started. The Resurrection of Jesus gives us a glimpse of our own resurrections to everlasting life in heaven.

What's next for us on this Easter Day? We greet each other with these words...

*...Alleluia, the Lord is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!*

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