

Easter Sunday – The Resurrection of the Lord – The Mass of Easter Day  
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Kirkland, Washington  
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Acts 10:34a, 37-43  
Psalm 118  
Colossians 3:1-4  
(See 1 Corinthians 5:7b-8a) Mark 16:1-7

*Go Back to Galilee*

In Sacred Scripture classes in seminary, one of the objectives is to learn how to apply different methods for analyzing and interpreting Biblical texts. For example, we learn to identify the historical context in which the texts were written; the audience the texts were written for; the type of language and vocabulary used; the structure of the different sections; and the literary genres. By analyzing these aspects of the Scriptures, we strengthen our faith by recognizing the different layers of meaning contained in the Bible that continue to speak to people today.<sup>1</sup>

These methods of analyzing the Scriptures are not meant to uncover “secret” or “hidden” meanings in the Bible.<sup>2</sup> Rather, these methods are open to the truth that we can always go deeper into the Bible. That the Word of God continually refreshes, nourishes, and strengthens us. It never “gets old.” It is like a spring that always flows and can never be exhausted.<sup>3</sup> We can – and should – frequently turn to the Bible to learn something new about God, ourselves, and how He is calling us to love and serve in the world.<sup>4</sup>

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One particular literary device that we learned about is called an *inclusio* – the Latin word for “inclusion.” An *inclusio* is when a section of a text ends in a way similar to how it began. That is, the author repeats the same or similar words or themes at the beginning and at the end. As a result, the beginning and ending form a bracket or enclosure that draws attention to something about the verses that are “included” in that section – or that sets that section apart in a way that enhances or adds something to our understanding of its meaning.

When we find an *inclusio* in Scripture, we can ask questions about why the author may have written it this way. And when we ask these questions, we not only ask why the human author wrote it this way – we ask why the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author, inspired the human author to write it this way.<sup>5</sup> *Is there something important for my faith life that God wants me to pay attention to?*

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In our Scripture Class on the three Synoptic Gospels,<sup>6</sup> we began the semester by studying the Gospel according to Mark. One of the things we practiced as we made our way through Mark was looking for literary devices, such as *inclusios*. On the last day that we studied Mark, we came to its conclusion and read the same words that we heard proclaimed today on this Easter Sunday morning:

On entering the tomb they saw a young man...clothed in a white robe... He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here... But go and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.'"<sup>7</sup>

When he finished reading, our professor asked us, "Do you see the *inclusio*?" So we all started looking on that page, looking for some kind of *inclusio* in that chapter. After a few moments he said,

No, it's not on the same page. It's back at the beginning. When the young man in the tomb tells the disciples to go back to Galilee, he is telling all of us as readers to go back to Galilee. To go back to the beginning of the Gospel, to Chapter 1, where Jesus of Nazareth began His ministry in Galilee and called His first disciples. The *inclusio* is the entire Gospel of Mark. Now that we have concluded our study of Mark, our task as disciples of Jesus Christ is to go back to

the beginning, back to Galilee where it all started, back to Chapter 1, and begin reading it again.

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That is the message that the Risen Jesus Christ had for His disciples that first Easter morning. That is the message that the Risen Jesus Christ has for all of us disciples today, on this Easter morning. We, as Christian disciples always need to return to Galilee. To start over. To re-read the Gospel from the beginning. To understand our life in light of the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection from the dead. His victory over death! His victory over our death!

Whenever we fall, or make a mistake, or sin – just like the Apostles did many times – Jesus simply calls us to get up and start again from the beginning. This is not merely a feel-good proverb on perseverance, like: “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”<sup>8</sup> This is the Good News that God has for all of us! That even when everything seems lost, there is a way back. That division, sin, and death are not the end of the story. Our destiny is Resurrection and eternal life in Heaven.<sup>9</sup> And Jesus told us the way to Resurrection and Heaven when He began His ministry in Galilee: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel.”<sup>10</sup>

*Repentance* means that there is no sin that cannot be forgiven and healed by God. He gave us a way to receive His mercy and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession.

*Belief in the Gospel* comes from reading it and re-reading the Word of God. That means regularly reading the Scriptures. It also means encountering the Word of God by coming to Mass, being nourished by the Eucharist, and spending time each day in prayer.

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Sometimes we don’t do these things because we think we don’t know how to or we’re not sure if our faith is strong enough to do them. Or we might think our faith is not strong enough to

see the Risen Jesus. Sometimes this is a subconscious thought that we have without realizing that it holds us back.

The lesson of the Resurrection – the Good News – is that we don't have to have strong faith to see the Risen Jesus.<sup>11</sup> After Jesus was crucified and buried in the Tomb, His disciples did not have a strong faith in the Resurrection. Their faith was shaken; they had scattered out of fear.<sup>12</sup>

It was because they listened to Jesus – went back to Galilee – went back to the beginning and started again – that they were able to see the Risen Jesus. It was not because they saw the Risen Jesus that they went back to Galilee. Do you see the difference? And it was their encounters with the Risen Jesus that changed everything and gave them faith in the Resurrection.

My friends, on this Easter Sunday, let us all go back to Galilee! Let's all start again and see the Risen Jesus showing us the way to Resurrection.

Alleluia! He is risen! Happy Easter!

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<sup>1</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* 109-119

<sup>2</sup> CCC 137; Also, 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Know this first of all, that there is no prophecy of scripture that is a matter of personal interpretation, for no prophecy ever came through human will; but rather human beings moved by the holy Spirit spoke under the influence of God."

<sup>3</sup> John 4:14: "[Jesus said to her,] '...but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"

John 6:35: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst.'"

Revelation 21:6: "He said to me, 'They are accomplished. I [am] the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water.'"

<sup>4</sup> CCC 104, 108, 111, 131-133, 141

Also, *Baltimore Catechism No. 1, Q. 6*: "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him for ever in heaven."

<sup>5</sup> See *Dei Verbum* 11-13; CCC 105-108, 135-136

<sup>6</sup> Synoptic Gospels. A term (from Gk. *synoptikós* "seeing together") referring to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, employed because of their common structure, perspective, and contents as distinguished from the gospel of John (*The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, Allen C. Myers, ed.).

<sup>7</sup> Mark 16:5-7

<sup>8</sup> From *Try, Try Again* by William Edward Hickson (1803-1870).

<sup>9</sup> CCC 654: "The Paschal Mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life."

<sup>10</sup> Mark 1:15

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<sup>11</sup> CCC 644: "...their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus."

<sup>12</sup> Mark 14:27-29: "Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be dispersed.' But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee.' Peter said to him, 'Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be.'"