**MONDAY DECEMBER 27 – OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS [C]**

**SAINT JOHN THE APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST**

**Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.**

**Seen the empty tomb, Mary of Magdala immediately runs to Simon Peter and to John. John never says his name in the Fourth Gospel. He always appears as the disciple Jesus loved. This is his new name. Here is how the event of the empty tomb is proclaimed to them: "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." Mary of Magdala does not think to Jesus’s resurrection. This truth is not in her mind. It is not part of her thoughts. For her, the reality is only one: Jesus has been stolen. His body has been taken away. On this night, there was an evident trespassing of the tomb. I am saying that since the Apostles and every other disciple of Jesus could not even have imagined the idea of a possible resurrection of Jesus, although Jesus had prophesied it to them numerous times. For them, Jesus is only a dead person. Nothing more. The words: “We do not know where they put him.” reveal that Mary of Magdala was not the one who went to the tomb. Other women, according to what refer the synoptic Gospels, had seen that the stone no longer kept the tomb.**

**Peter and John went out together from the house where they were, and go to the tomb. For them, too, Jesus was dead. They, too, did not even thought about the prophesied resurrection for the third day by Jesus himself and precisely to them. They go to the tomb since they want to ascertain if things are precisely as Mary of Magdala has told them.**

**Peter and John run toward the tomb. They do not walk. They almost fly, so much was the turmoil the news just heard has put in their heart. What happened? Are things like that? Has Jesus really been taken away? Who did that? Many are the doubts and the questions crowding their mind. John is younger than Peter, though. He runs faster. He arrives first to the tomb. The greater is the turmoil and the greater is the desire of knowing, of ascertaining. The greater is the desire and the greater is the running to reach until the dissipation of what brings concern to our spirit. For this reason, John does not catch up with Peter and arrives for first to the tomb.**

**He arrives to the tomb, but he does not go in. He sees the burial cloths in the tomb, but he remains outside. In this decision of not going in, the great wisdom of John is showed. Alone, he could never be a believable testimony before history and the world. In two, instead, one is believable testimonies before history and eternity. A first truth already arises, though. Jesus has not been stolen. The burial cloth covered the body of Christ. If Christ had been taken away, they would have taken away with the burial cloths, not without them. Something has happened for John, even if he does not still say what happened in the tomb according to him.**

**Then, Simon Peter arrives, too. Come to the tomb, he goes in. He notices what John had already seen. Namely, he sees that the burial cloths are there, in the tomb. They are rolled up, not scattered here and there. The tomb shows a wonderful order. Where there is order, there is never the work of a robber. The robber is disorder as the robber is rush. The robber has very little time. The one who has little time is always untidy in heart, in mind, in works. Everything is a great disorder for the one who has little time. For robbers, time is almost nothing, one instant, one moment. The tomb attests that there is a great order. Not only are there the burial cloths rolled up – not scattered – in it. There is also the cloth that covered the head of Jesus. The cloth is not rolled up with the burial cloths, but it is rolled up in a separate place. It is as if a tidy hand had put each thing at its place. The sign of the order attests the first truth: Jesus has not been stolen. If he has not been stolen, what might it have happened? Here there has been no work of human hand. What hand has operated in the tomb in such a short time?**

**Let us read the text of Jn 20,2-8**

**So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed.**

**After Peter, John too goes in the tomb. After having gone in, John says of himself: “He saw and believed.” What did he see? What did he believe in? John saw that in the tomb there was peace, serenity, order, composure, silence, quiet. There was in it no sign of war, chaos, bustle, rush or things like that. John saw the invisible and namely that Jesus had not been stolen. He was risen. Since through the signs, he saw the resurrection of Jesus, he also believed in the resurrection. He saw the resurrection of Jesus and believed in it. He saw it and did not doubt about it. If John saw the resurrection of Jesus, what value does it have to add that he believe in it? John, instead, saw and believed. He saw and did not doubt of the new life of Jesus.**

**Being faith a true and full human act, true and full human act must his announcement be. In proclaiming of faith, the entire man must participate. Here is how John lives the announcement as a true human act: “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life - for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete.” (1Jn 1, 1-4) The Gospel is not only what Jesus has said. But also what Jesus has done. He has not just done it and neither has He said it through his humanity, but also because He handed all himself over to the Father and to the Holy Spirit. The Gospel is the narration of Christ who lives and fulfils in the fullness of his human and divine, earthly and heavenly mystery. Even the disciple of Jesus, if he wants man, through him, to reach or open himself to the faith in Christ, must appear with all the power of his being transformed by the love of the Father, by the grace of Christ, by the communion of the Holy Spirit. It is essential, perennial way, always to be followed.**

**Even in the Apostle John, faith arises from vision. Actually, he has not seen the Risen Christ. He has seen the signs left in the tomb by the resurrection of his Teacher. In the tomb, there is a wonderful, angelic, divine order. This order reveals him that Jesus is truly risen, according to the Word dais by Him and also according to the old prophecies. The disciple of Jesus proclaims the resurrection. What must man see to believe in the Word proclaiming the mystery of Christ the Lord? The order of grace, truth, justice, holiness reigning in the tomb of sin that is the body of man. Having sin left the body of man, his place has been taken by virtues. They reveal that he is really risen in Christ the Lord. Instead, if in his body sin, vice, transgression and all the works of flesh dwell in him, this vision will never bring to faith in Christ. It is clearly evident that Jesus has not risen in him. The signs carried out from the coming of Risen Christ in his body are lacking. The Word will always have to be accompanied by the signs of virtues, of grace and of every fruit of the Holy Spirit. Faith will always arise if our body is emptied from every vice. May the Virgin Mary make of our body a body empty of vice, adorned with the order of virtue.**