

## Homily **Easter Sunday - Year C** (21.4.19)

You know, this gospel is very powerful, but John doesn't write like the other gospel writers, he's got an eye for detail. I don't know whether you noticed, this gospel has so much detail in it and he can't resist it. He weaves the material into a lot of symbolism, he loves signs and symbols. So I don't know whether you notice little quirks, I mean, the thing about Peter reaching the tomb, the beloved disciple reaching the tomb first, and then Peter. And when Simon Peter arrived, he went right into the tomb. It says,

**"Saw the linen cloths on the ground,"** as if they had dropped,

**"and also the cloth that had been over his head. But this was not with the other cloths on the ground, but rolled up,"**

implying neatly,

**"in a place by itself."**

That's interesting detail. And then it said,

**"And then the other disciple who reached the tomb first also went in and saw this."**

So something must have been special about this linen cloth.

**"He saw this, and he believed before Peter."**

It's very powerful.

So what's it about? Well, John's church in Patmos was allegedly filled with lots of Palestinian Jews who would have spoke Aramaic and it's very interesting that John, in his gospel, uses a Greek word for veil, that in Aramaic is the same word as the face veil that Moses wore when he came down from the mountain with the 10 commandments.

I don't know whether you remember this, it's the second time he came down, by the way, because the first time he came down, they'd all rebelled and started worshipping a metal calf, so he threw the tablets on the floor and crushed them and made them drink them all in water, and all this sort of

business. Then he went back up the hill, eventually and he came down a second time. In Exodus 34 it says this,

**"When Moses came down from the mountain, he did not know that the skin of his face was radiant after speaking with God."**

And he said, the people couldn't bear it, it was frightening.

And so they begged him to cover his face, so he put a veil on his face and it goes on to say,

**"Until he returned to speak to the Lord."**

In other words, while this glow lasted, he wore a veil in front of the people but when he went back up the mountain to pray he took the veil off. And so that's a very interesting little detail. And the detail is, of course, that when the beloved disciple comes into the tomb, being a good Jew of Palestinian origin, he recognized the face veil that had been put over Jesus, and he realized that when Moses, who put away the veil when he ascended to meet the God in glory in the mountain, that Jesus was the new Moses who had put aside his veil neatly, because the veil of his flesh was gone as he ascended to the presence of God. He had laid it aside, rolled up, for now he was transformed in glory. And I think this that John has weaved in is a powerful sign which the beloved disciple saw. And the beloved disciple is purposely not named because you can insert your name for the beloved disciple. The beloved disciple is the one who walks close to Jesus.

Have we seen the signs? Do we see and believe like a beloved disciple? This is the meaning. But it's not the only time the veil is mentioned. St. Paul mentions it in 2 Corinthians. I'll have to write these down as I forget quotes. St. Paul says to the Corinthians,

**"We are not like Moses who put a veil over his face,"** he says.

But he said,

**"Indeed, those who can't see what Jesus represents, to this very day that same veil is still there for them. A veil never lifted, since Christ alone,"** in other words, through grace,

**"can lift the veil."**

But he says,

**"We, the believers... ",**

that's us in church today,

**"We with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect."**

In other words, now that Christ has put aside the veil and revealed his glory, every time we in faith participate in the Easter mystery, our inner soul glows brighter and brighter after the pattern of Christ.