

The Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem  
Grand Master: H.E. Don Francisco de Borbon Graf von Hardenberg GCLJ



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Dear Brothers and Sisters

Easter tide 2026

Although one of the great preachers of the early Church, St John Chrysostom sums up the difficulties, not only for the preacher, but of all of us called to bear witness to the events we have celebrated in recent days and continue to celebrate afresh each Sunday:

*'Just as I cannot fully express his birth in words, neither can I wholly encompass his going forth from the tomb.'*

Words crack and slip and slide, for we are in the realms of the supernatural, not in the sense of events contrary to nature but rather, 'more' than nature. We are in the realm of Grace. In that realm, we are always invited to see more than we can see with the naked eye. Among the rich biblical texts that speak of the encounter with the risen Lord, the deepening of sight is central to the discover of the truth.

In John's account Mary simply 'sees' the empty tomb and runs in distress to Peter and John with the natural assumption that the body has been taken. That she finds them together is itself beautiful. Peter who barely two days before had denied he knew Jesus is found with the young one, 'the beloved disciple', the only one faithful enough to be at the foot of the Cross. Yet they are together! Does John bear no ill will? Does he offer no deserved rebuke or condemnation to the denier? Why not? Surely, because he is one who has learned to rest in the Saviour's bosom. (John 13:23) ) John has stayed close enough to Jesus to listen to the rhythm of the Saviour's heart of love. He knows the mercy that fills and flows from that divine heart. He was there, and heard, "Father, forgive them..." He will do the same.

John is a disciple who knows where he is best placed. At the very beginning of the Gospel, the evangelist uses the same phrase to speak of the relationship between the Son to the Father. (John 1 : 18) The disciple is with Jesus as Jesus is with the Father.

John gets to the tomb first, and looks in. The word in Greek has about it a looking that comes just because your eyes can see. Peter then goes in and studies the scene. He sees the grave clothes. The Greek word is the one from which in other languages we get our word 'theatre'. It's an attentive looking. But then John also goes in and he 'sees and believes', and the word used then has the deeper sense of understanding or comprehending.

These different depths of seeing are open to us all, the deepest seeing requiring not simply the exercise of the mind but of the heart.

The other great moment of recognition is when the risen Good Shepherd calls Mary by name. The Good Shepherd 'calls his own sheep by name...the sheep know his voice'. (John 10) I suppose Mary had experienced plenty of name calling in her day. But, more profoundly, she had experienced the call of Jesus, of him knowing her in the deepest way. She knew his voice. No wonder she clung to him! What a Grace filled moment in that garden!

As disciples we too must train ourselves to recognise his voice in the midst of all the voices that cry out for our attention and sometimes for our manipulation to no good purpose. The risen Lord is still calling and does so through his Church and the supernatural works of Grace entrusted to her, and that make her what she is, his Body. Above all else knowing him in the breaking of bread, 'seeing' him in the Blessed Sacrament.

As you enter these great Mysteries afresh in this Easter Season, may they fill you with renewed joy. May we all find our place near the Saviour's breast, our hearts beating with the same generous love and mercy. May it be so for our Order, in our attitudes to each other and in our works of mercy among those we serve. And when we fail? When we mess up? Well, let the same John Chrysostom have the last word:

*'Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave.'*

+Lindsay OGS