



Daily Reflections

December 27, 2017

Scripture

John 1: 1-8

On the first day of the week,
Mary Magdalene 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 do not 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.

Our Scripture Reflection

As our Gospel text reveals to us, the joy of Christmas evolved into the joy of Easter. No nativity, no empty tomb. As we rejoice over one event may we always keep our eyes on the other.

Food for your Journey

There is a difference between pleasure and joy. C.S. Lewis puts it very clearly in one of his books when he writes, "Joy is never within our power, but pleasure often is." We're like children faced with a pile of presents under a Christmas tree. Do we tear into them all at once, in a mad frenzy that will be over as quickly as it began, with only a pile of torn wrapping paper and dismembered bows to show for it? Or do we hang back, watching for the right cues, waiting for unexpected joys to be revealed to us?

The very definition of joy, according to Lewis, is that it is unexpected. Lewis entitles his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*. That's because his personal journey to Christianity was a journey away from aimless pleasure-seeking and towards joy. We must learn to let go of our fears that pleasure is all there is, and learn to trust God to give us those gifts of joy that come to us so unexpectedly, beyond our deserving.

Joy surprises. That's its very nature. You can't capture joy any more than you can capture the wind -- yet, there are plenty of people trying to bottle it and sell it to us. (Or, at least, some cheap knock-off.)

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, During this Christmas season I am reminded of the greatest gifts that I have received. No, not the ones that I found under the tree, but rather, the manger, the cross and the empty tomb. Thank You, Lord, for giving everything for me. Amen.