

Sunday Homily

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

4 APRIL 2021

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I

“You too will be revealed in all your glory with him.”

Illustration

On a windswept hillside on a remote coastal peninsula a hillwalker came across human remains. They had been lying there for anything up to ten years. The police were called and an investigation was begun. There were two main lines of enquiry. The first was a forensic examination of the body and of the scene. The second was to examine the files in police records of missing persons in the area over the past ten years. There was also a third dimension to be considered. Many families in the area had a relative who had gone missing, and so many old wounds would be reopened; and the police were very sensitive to this fact.

Who was this person who had gone missing? How did he die? And why? Who are his family, his loved ones, and how have they coped all these years? Such discoveries remind us that there are many people all over the world who go missing and are never seen again. And there are many families who live with that loss and mourn for their loved and lost ones.

Gospel Teaching

On the first Easter morning Mary of Magdala came to the tomb to mourn and to anoint the body of Jesus. When she arrived at the tomb she found that there was no body to anoint. The tomb was empty. She was faced with a missing-person enquiry. Where was Jesus? Who had taken the body? And why? In her confusion and upset and panic, she came running back to the disciples and told them what she had seen. Or rather, what she had not seen.

Peter and John go to see for themselves. They find nothing – but they discover everything. They know that the body has not been stolen. Who would want to steal it? At this moment, as they look at an empty tomb, they begin to see the meaning of Christ’s words to them when he spoke of rising from the dead. Death is so final; and so the words of Jesus were not making any sense. But now that death is done with, those words make all the sense in the world.

Now that Jesus is alive, it is not a dead body that the disciples seek, but a missing person. They do not have long to wait. Peter tells us the story himself. At the house of the Roman soldier Cornelius, he tells his listeners the whole story of Jesus. How they, the disciples, had been with Jesus for three years, and heard his teaching and witnessed his power of healing. How they had seen him die on