Mystery of Salvation

April 5, 2026

Easter of the Resurrection
Homily by Fr. Sabino Chialà, Prior of Bose
Matthew 28,1–10

Brothers and sisters,

Christ is risen! He is truly risen!
We have echoed this proclamation, which surprises us every time. Perhaps, as we pronounce these words, we feel somewhat inadequate, as if repeating words too great for us. And yet this is our faith: the proclamation of Christ's Passover, which we relive not as a simple commemoration of a past event, but as a reality that becomes true here, for us, in this night and in this world of ours.

In recent days we have followed Jesus in his lowering himself at the feet of his disciples during the supper and then in his passion. We have meditated on the intensity of those moments in the life of the Messiah and their resonance in our own lives. We have contemplated the Lord who teaches us to place ourselves at the feet of our neighbour, and then who takes upon himself the suffering of every human being…

Tonight that one mystery of Easter invites us to take a further step—a step that does not contradict the previous ones but sheds light on their meaning. Tonight we dare to affirm that Easter is not only a mystery that enlightens and shares in suffering, but also a mystery that saves.

The Easter of Christ is a mystery of salvation…
A word difficult to understand! The very term *salvation* often seems worn out and faded to us, and so we try to avoid it. Yet this is the ultimate meaning of our Easter celebration!

If what we are celebrating at this Easter is not an event of salvation, then it is an imposture. In that case the chief priests would have been right—those of whom it is said, shortly before our passage, that they went to Pilate to ask him to place a guard at the tomb "so that his disciples may not come and steal him and then say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last imposture would be worse than the first" (Mt 27:64).

Let us think carefully: the first time we hear the Easter proclamation resound in the Gospels—"he has risen from the dead!"—it is on the lips of those who consider it an imposture. Yes, because the resurrection of Jesus is either an event of salvation or it is an imposture—that is, a deception.

Sooner or later all of us will be tempted by this doubt, perhaps even only for a moment, perhaps in more refined and elegant forms. The question will arise within us as well: what if it were all an illusion? What if it were merely an easy consolation? A kind of anesthetic? Something that sells well in every time of uncertainty—and especially in ours—to sustain the horrors passing before our eyes… provided we decide to keep them open.

Another possibility is that we turn it into a half-imposture, limiting ourselves to seeing in Jesus a prophet who indicated a path of wisdom perhaps more appealing than others. Or a good teacher who shared our sufferings—and that is already much! —and who remained faithful unto death, but with everything ending there.

But in Jesus we do not recognize only the prophet and the teacher. We also recognize the Lord who came to save us. Not only the one who washes our feet; not only the one who gathers and weeps our tears… but also the one who dries them, redeems them, and restores light to disfigured faces. The one who saves.

This is the message we receive from the Gospel we have just heard, which enables us to take another step forward along the path of these days.

Friday was an intense day: we reread the passion, with its painful events and its harsh words, in a whirlwind that became ever more dramatic and senseless. And then… a strange stillness descended. That particular silence of Saturday. God's Saturday and ours. A time of descent—even into the underworld—each into one's own, and Jesus into that of all.

But time did not stop there: a new dawn appeared, as we heard:
"After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week…"

A new day and a new week, when two women, moved by feelings difficult to interpret, go "to see the tomb."

The verb used by Matthew is striking: they do not go to "visit," as is usually translated, but to see. In Matthew's account there is not even the motive of anointing the body, as in Mark, where we read that the women bought aromatic oils to anoint him. Here they simply go to see "the tomb," where they expect to find the torn body of a dead man.

And there they become witnesses of a revelation accompanied by apocalyptic signs, the first of which—the earthquake—recalls what had already happened at the moment of the crucifixion.

The reaction to all this is fear: first that of the guards, and then that of the women, to whom this feeling is referred three times. In the angel's words:
"Do not be afraid."
When the evangelist says they left the tomb "with fear and great joy."
And in their encounter with Jesus, who says to them:
"Do not be afraid."

Paradoxically, fear pervades the account of the resurrection much more than that of the passion. There, there had been dismay, suffering, anguish… here there is fear. A fear arising from the fact that the resurrection places us before a void, a distance.

One does not arrive at faith in the resurrection by the smooth paths of logical reasoning, but along steep and demanding trails. A movement is necessary! The movement described in our passage. The women do not find Jesus at the tomb.

It would have been much simpler if they had found a reassuring Jesus seated on the tomb, welcoming them with a smile and saying that everything was over, that the passion had been only a parenthesis and that everything had finally been resolved.

No! At the tomb the women find an angel who invites them onto a path—and only if they accept to set out will they encounter the Risen One.

Indeed, it is only because they "leave the tomb quickly" and "run" that "Jesus meets them."

There is an unbridgeable distance, a void to be received, sustained, inhabited… in order to enter into faith in the resurrection. There is also a journey to be made, which requires trust—and even a little madness.

For this reason, the "sign" of the resurrection is not a victorious Jesus holding a banner, but the empty tomb.

"He is not here. He has risen!"

He is not here…
The resurrection does not restore Jesus' presence—it transforms it.

This means that the resurrection does not cancel the passion but gives it meaning. A meaning to which only the journey of faith can lead.

And here I return to the theme of salvation from which I began this reflection. What does it mean that the Easter we are celebrating is an event of salvation? What does it save, if tomorrow the world will probably be burdened with more corpses and ruins than it is today?

It means believing that we human beings can destroy—but not erase. We can destroy, disintegrate, pulverize a human body, a city, an entire people… but we cannot erase them. At least a void remains—the void of those who are no longer there.

And the Risen One and faith in him remind us of this.

Because we believe that in him there is a beyond, because we believe in the resurrection of the flesh—which is not the resurrection of molecules but of concrete histories and faces—we are compelled to count the absent, who are not numbers, much less negligible ones.

He is not here…
And nothing will be as before.

Believing in the resurrection does not mean believing in a stroke of a sponge that wipes away sufferings that no one has the authority to erase. That would be another imposture.

But it is by remembering their absence that we can hope for a beyond.

Faith in the resurrection does not cancel but reintegrates every creature into its full dignity—the dignity that was denied to them.

Here lies the leap of faith: to believe that the one who is no longer is also; that every injustice receives recognition, a salvation that comes from the Risen One; that the Risen One preserves in order to restore what has been taken away.

This is our faith. This is the message of salvation entrusted to us who celebrate the Lord's Easter:

Christ is risen and nothing is the same anymore!

In the light of Christ's resurrection no one is without importance any longer. By proclaiming Christ's resurrection, we recognize and remember every space left empty by what has been destroyed, every life suppressed, every smile extinguished… because we believe that to each one the Risen One gives value and preserves their face until the day when he restores it in its full light.