

A generation ago, whenever Catholic teachers got a tough question to answer, they had a stock response. They'd say, "It's a mystery." How are there three persons in one God? How do the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ? How did Jesus rise from the dead? The answer was always the same, "It's a mystery." That response was not supposed to mean, "I don't know." Or, "Scram and don't bother me." It was supposed to mean something good, that God works in our lives in ways beyond what we can imagine. When you come into the presence of the mystery of God you discover something so good it takes your breath away.

In John's account of the resurrection, the three disciples who discover the empty tomb have no explanation for it. Mary of Magdala sees the stone rolled away and the empty tomb. But she concludes the body was stolen. Peter and the beloved disciple run to the tomb and see the cloths inside. But in John's version of this story, there is no angel there. No messenger from God appears to explain to the disciples what the empty tomb means. They are left to figure it out for themselves. And they struggled with it. Today's gospel concludes with the phrase, "They did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead." They are left with a real mystery. In this case, though, the mystery was not completely a happy one. It left them puzzled.

The one who does not seem puzzled is the beloved disciple. The gospel says he went in after Peter, he saw and believed. He is a model of immediate faith, a real contrast to Thomas, whose story of doubt we will hear next Sunday.

There is plenty of mystery to life. Why do the innocent suffer? Why do terrorists threaten holy places? Why does the church experience shame? Why can't the family get along? We don't know. But when we stand before the mysteries of our life we stand on holy ground. Mary of Magdala and Peter stood inside the empty tomb and saw the burial cloths. They had plenty of evidence around them, but they did not yet understand the Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. When we do not understand why God gave us the life we have, why some of the pieces do not fit together, we may be standing, like Peter and

**Mary, in the midst of the evidence, but not seeing the answer.
The answer is always Christ, whose incarnation, ministry,
resurrection and love for us is the solution of every mystery.**