

Easter Sunday 2018
Easter Vigil – John: 20.1-9
Acts:10.34,37-43///Col:3.1-4///John: 20.1-9

→I would imagine that all of us have a closet full of clothes at home...and most of us take this closet for granted...

→our closet of clothes might seem an odd place to look for a message of God...however if you look closely at the story of Jesus' passion, his death and resurrection...it is similar to staring into a closet full of clothes.

→have you ever considered for a moment.....how many references there are to garments, cloth, cloaks and veils in the telling of Jesus' last days on earth...

→recall just a few:

--he took a towel and tied it around his waist to dry the feet of the disciples on the night before his trial and execution

--the tunic was pulled off a young man fleeing the scene of Jesus' arrest

--a red cloak was thrown across his back, scarred with welts and blood from the soldiers whip

--the veil of Veronica used to wipe his face on the way to Golgotha

--the seamless garment which the soldier tossed dice,

--the curtain torn in two and finally as we here tonight [today] the burial cloths rolled up in a separate place in the tomb

→I believe...these references to woven cloths have been recorded in our Scriptures for a very specific reason....

→they appear and are told to us to help us believe---as the apostle John believed—when he found himself at the empty tomb on Easter morning

When Simon Peter arrived.... *“He went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the [others] 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.

→years ago, I remember talking with a woman recently widowed...she and her husband had been married nearly half a century...and when her husband died, she grieved deeply for a long time

→during that time, the only way she could fall asleep at night was to go to the closet and wrap herself in his bath robe and go back to bed...

→for her a terrycloth bath robe became a channel of God’s grace

Likewise...in the familiar story of the Prodigal Son...recall, that when the son returned home...the first thing the father does upon having his son return ...is he calls for a robe to be put on his back...instead of dressing the kid down...the father dresses him up.

→and throughout the many references to clothes over the past few days in this story of Christ...tonight [today] there is a special mention to the burial clothes rolled up in the corner of the tomb.

--on this Easter night [day] how has the Lord clothed you?

→for the grieving widow that bath robe was her hope in the resurrection...

→for the returning son...that robe was the father's hope that the Son had been found...

→for those entering the tomb....the burial clothes gave them hope that the Lord had been raised.

→this Lent our parish theme was "finding hope"....and the cross of our Church that contains all our individual crosses

→they represent you and me finding our hope...

→our hope in the Lord...our hope in a new life...our hope in the resurrection

PAUSE

→today Christians around the world celebrate Easter and in essence what we celebrate is

--that our life has meaning....

--that our life is redeemed....

--that our life has been saved...

--because of the hope we have...found in the clothes of Christ

→Jesus the Son of God, stripped naked and nailed to a cross is now wrapped in the glory of the resurrection...and so are you and I

PAUSE

→[and] today is the day for you and me to realize that nothing can separate us from God...

--since God was faithful to Christ...God will be faithful to you and me

→on that first Easter, God destroyed evil and put an end to death..

--he gave us new life....a new creation....a new beginning

→and that new beginning continues today

→the Risen Christ invites us to put all the darkness behind us...to move beyond our fears and suffering...to move from the past to the present....from winter to spring...from death to life.

→and the clothes we wear....the clothes in our closets...are the clothes of Christ

→we now wear the uniform of the Risen Lord...on our hearts and in our souls

→for today we have truly...found hope!