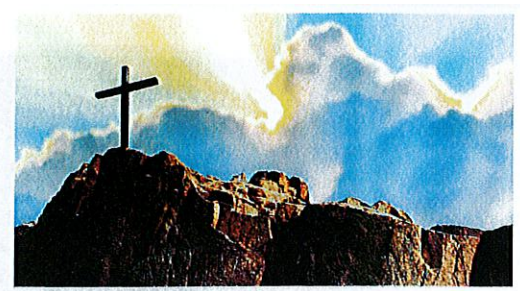


WHY DID JESUS FOLD THE NAPKIN?



Why did Jesus fold the linen burial cloth after His resurrection?

The Gospel of John (20:7) tells us that the napkin, which was placed over the face of Jesus, was not just thrown aside like the grave clothes. The Bible takes an entire verse to tell us that the napkin was neatly folded, and was placed separate from the grave clothes.

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and I don't know where they have put him!' Peter and the other disciples ran to the tomb to see. The other disciple outran Peter and got there first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen cloth lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying to the side.

Was that important? Absolutely!

Is it really significant? Yes!

In order to understand the significance of the folded napkin, you have to understand a little bit about the Hebrew tradition of that day. The folded napkin had to do with the Master and Servant, and every Jewish boy knew this tradition.

When the servant set the dinner table for the master, he made sure that it was exactly the way the master wanted it...

The table was furnished perfectly, and then the servant would wait, just out of sight, until the master had finished eating, and the servant would not dare touch that table until the master was finished.

Now, if the master were done eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers, his mouth, and clean his beard, and would wad up that napkin and toss it onto the table.

The servant would then know to clear the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, 'I'm done.'

But if the master got up from the table, and folded his napkin, and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because..... *The folded napkin meant, 'I'm coming back!'*

He is Coming Back!

Praise be to God!



PRIVATE PRAYERS

IN PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

(May be said before Mass or immediately before Communion.)

PRAYER OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Almighty and eternal God, behold, I approach the Sacrament of Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. I approach as one who is sick to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of eternal brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Therefore I beseech Thee, of Thine infinite goodness, to heal my sickness, to wash away my filth, to enlighten my blindness, to enrich my poverty, and to clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords with such reverence and humility, with such contrition and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention, as may conduce to the salvation of my soul.

Grant, I beseech Thee, that I may receive not only the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, but also the fruit and virtue of this Sacrament. O most indulgent God, grant me so to receive the Body of Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took of the Virgin Mary, that I may be found worthy to be incorporated with His mystical Body and numbered among His members.

O most loving Father, grant that I may one day contemplate forever, face to face, Thy beloved Son, Whom now on my pilgrimage I am about to receive under the sacramental veils; Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

These prayers may also be used by those wishing to make a spiritual communion.