

## Easter Sunday memories

Before I became a Christian, I did not know that Easter is a Christian celebration. All we did year after year on Easter Monday was what we call "sibacka". Look into google translator and it will come out with the term "whipping ceremony" I hated it. All the boys had to go round the female members of their family and whip them with a homemade whip made of young willow, and pour water on them, potentially perfume. And as you performed this sometimes rather painful ritual, you were expected to recite a rhyme like.

*Šibi ryby, rybičky,  
ja som chlapček maličký,  
šibem zhora, šibem zdola,  
aby dievka pekná bola.*



I really did not like it, because I was so shy and the idea of going around all the females in our vicinity, family, friend or neighbour, was absolutely petrifying. Anyway there was a small benefit for the boys in such that we were given chocolates, decorated Easter eggs and money. My friend Miso was the best at it. After Easter when school started we all shared our stories of how it had gone. Miso always got the most money and I thought Miso is amazing and perhaps next year I will get better. So we were all good friends with Miso as he sometimes gave some hints on how to be more effective. As we grew up and our innocence shifted a bit further, on Easter Monday we organised something more like raiding parties. Imagine 10 -15 teenage boys coming into your home and exercising a traditional ritual of whipping and splashing cold water on all female occupants. The poor girls ran and screamed and I guess they did not like it, yet if we did not come they would be offended. I am not sure why exactly but after ladies got whipped, they offered us alcohol, perhaps to slow our reflexes so next door we will not catch every one! So this was my Easter until well into my twenties. I must confess I did a lot of harm, drank a lot of liquor and did not earn as much money as Miso. This Easter tradition does not have to be inevitably so negative, and with respect to old traditions I must say that we did not follow the protocol very rigidly. Sorry ladies, please forgive us.

When I read about John's account of Easter Sunday, (John 20,1-23) it reminds me a little, only a little bit of my "pre-Easter experiences". Men are running, ladies are crying. Yet this is not a tradition it is something absolutely new! It is a new chapter in the history of the human race. The power of the resurrection has its first general performance and we are not ready to understand at once. It comes with time. As the disciples so often had to stay "after school" and repeatedly ask Jesus what is going on, so do we. We learn in life how much we are restored and equipped to live a life in the power of the resurrection. We learn that even if we lose life we will gain it, even if we die we will live. We learn that when we are weak we are strong, even when there is no money there are resources, and where there is no life a new life can begin. In the light of resurrection we wonder if the question "is there a life after death" should be turned around and we should rather ask "is there a life before death"

We died with Christ and we live with him. In Christ we are a new creation, Hallelujah.