

Easter Sunday
April 4, 2021
Church of St. John the Evangelist
Canon Paul Walker
Mark 16:1-8

It was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome who were watching the horror of the crucifixion from a distance. They used to follow Jesus and were described as the women who provided for Jesus when he was in Galilee. That was their home.

The next day, early in the morning they are going to the tomb just outside Jerusalem to complete the burial ritual by anointing the body. Even in his death they continued to provide for him. Their main concern was how they were going to remove the stone. But much to their amazement, the stone was already moved. The tomb was large enough that they could walk inside, and as they did so, much to their horror they discovered that the body of their beloved Jesus was gone.

It was grief upon grief.

What they encountered could be described as an angel who spoke to them and gave them words that largely fell on deaf ears.

“You are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.
He is not here. He has been raised.
Go tell the others that he is going on ahead of you in Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”



That's a lot of information to process when you are in a blurred state of post traumatic stress. In fact, it's not even *post* trauma - they are still experiencing the trauma, and this continues to be part of it.

No wonder they fled the tomb in terror. Much like Zechariah's response on hearing the the news of the birth of John, they too were left speechless at this angelic intervention. And Mark records that they didn't tell anyone. They were silent, for they were afraid.

Well, somehow they recovered enough from this encounter to tell the others. Somehow they gathered their things together and mustered up the courage to return to their home in Galilee, because after all that is where this movement all began.

Galilee is where Jesus first went when he came out of forty days in the desert. Galilee is where Jesus delivered the man of a demon in the synagogue on the sabbath and everyone was amazed.

It is where Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, cleansed the leper, and restored the paralytic - and all this on his first three days there.

Galilee is where Jesus called his first disciples and taught them. Galilee is where so many people gathered that there was no room for them in the house. Galilee is where a great multitude followed him hearing all that he was doing; and

Galilee is where they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. They all came to Galilee.

And Galilee is where when the unclean spirits saw him they fell down before him and shouted, *“You are the Son of God”* - the same words that the Centurion spoke when Jesus gave up his last on the cross: *“Truly this was the Son of God!”*

So to Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Salome, despite their fears, it makes sense for them to hear enough of the angel’s message to pack their bags and head back home - because of all places perhaps they know that is the place where they will be able to see the resurrected Jesus - just as he said.

Head home to discover the resurrected Jesus. These are curious words to hear during a pandemic when we find ourselves at home in a lockdown and not together in this building for a second Easter - perhaps for many of us home is where we we first learned of Jesus. Home is where we first met Jesus. And home is where we pray our daily prayers and where, during a pandemic, we continue to practise our faith in the resurrected Jesus.

Jesus goes on ahead of the women, to their home in Galilee. There it was promised that they would see Jesus, just as he said.

May you, like these women, know that Jesus goes ahead you in whatever you face. May you, like these women, discover the resurrected Jesus in your home; and may you, like these women, tell others about it, for in him all our fears are dissolved, and ultimately our fear of death itself is swallowed up forever, and we find our rest with the

communion of saints in light: all, and only because Jesus has gone ahead of us, just as he said.

We are praying for you today.



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