

HE IS RISEN!

Our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ of God, speaks to us, even today, and we hear that *they went out and hurried away from the tomb, because they were trembling and bewildered; and they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid*, (Mark 16:8).

How could anyone be afraid of anything on Easter morning? Yes, this is fear caused by sin and who wouldn't be afraid after the events of this past week? You really can't blame the women, for you would have done the same, in their place. What happened this week makes me surprised any of us made it to today, much less the Marys to the tomb of Jesus. There were wars and rumours of wars. There was strife. There was grief. There was conflict. There were taxes and there was fear.

Fear happens when we are not in control. Fear grips us when things happen quickly, when gross misunderstandings occur, and when we are completely at the mercy of another.

Fear gripped the Israelites as they saw God's wrath revealed upon the mountain top. Fear gripped the disciples as they knew the Temple guard would and could do to them, and their families, all they were doing to Jesus on Good Friday.

Fear grips you when? Certainly not all the time, but only in special situations: surgeries, sickness, financial straits, each one having its own weight. Fears of finances are a little easier to understand because we are dealing with men. But when faced with a gun, a knife, or a surgeon's blade, you are dealing with God, of whom you have no control.

If that is the case, then we should be quaking in fear every day. What prevents the sun from falling or the moon for that matter? What holds up the sky or even the entire earth so that it doesn't plummet into the depths? By all rights, all of humanity should be scared out of their wits all the time.

Repent! Death makes no promises, except to come and collect everything from you whenever it wants. You fear what men can do to you, more than you fear God. If death does not come to you today, then one day. No matter how confident you are at this moment, it will happen.

This is the fear of the Marys. They have been betrayed all week by their own people. Jesus has been arrested, beaten, scourged, and condemned by His own brothers, the Jews. There is a small break, because of the Sabbath, but what will happen to them once business resumes today?

Thus, they follow Jesus towards the grave. They go to the place where they most expect to find a man who has been face to face with death. They follow Him to the cemetery, expecting their own end at any moment, but impossible of impossibles, they are turned away.

The young man at the tomb acts as door warden at the portal of Jesus' tomb. He is stood there, as a pastor is stood in the midst of life, to turn all who come Jesus' way, away. They are not to follow Him into death, they are to follow Him to light, life, and forgiveness.

Resurrection. Sacraments. This is now the sweet song we sing. What can fear, grief, or death take away from us that our risen Lord and Saviour cannot return? Our loved ones that have fallen asleep and will fall asleep in the Lord, will be returned to us in the Resurrection. And nothing ails us so horribly, that the Body and Blood of Jesus cannot cure.

In the depths of your sin, from which you feel God has left you or forsaken you, you are resurrected, not just retrieved. As a fireman braves the blaze to rescue just one more person, so has Jesus become a man, suffered, died, and was buried all just to rescue you and to give you Himself, Body and Blood.

Sin might have brought the Marys, and us, to the tomb of Jesus, but faith leads us away with such joy that trembling and astonishment seize us. We no longer are able to say anything to anyone until our Lord, risen from the dead, gives us the words to say.

Those words are "Alleluia", Gloria in Excelsis, Amen, and I believe. Alleluia Christ is risen! Glory be to God on high and on earth, peace, goodwill towards men. Amen, yes, yes, it shall be so. I truly believe that by His Body and Blood, I am forgiven. Feed me this resurrection sacrament which Christ has spent the entire history of the world preparing, just for this day and just so you could receive it. Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

