

EASTER VIGIL – 2020

St Mark's account of the events of Easter Day begins with the women going to the tomb to finish the anointing of Jesus' body. They find the stone rolled back and they go into the tomb where they do not find Jesus' corpse but a young man in a white robe sitting where the body was. To say as Mark does, that the women were amazed, is probably an understatement, but the women say nothing.

It is the young man who says that Jesus is risen and that the women should go and tell the disciples, and particularly Peter, that they will see Jesus in Galilee. Peter's inclusion is intentional for even the one who was too ashamed to admit he was a disciple of Jesus is not excluded. Jesus had said that anyone who was too ashamed of him, the Son of Man would be ashamed of them at the Last Judgement (Lk 9:26). In the two words, 'and Peter,' the young messenger in the tomb delivered the gospel message that was about to be proclaimed. Even the one who was ashamed of Jesus will witness to and serve Jesus in the mission about to begin in Galilee.

The women fled from the tomb saying nothing. St Mark doesn't tell us whether they delivered the message to the disciples or not. Even so, the message is consistent with the good news of Isaiah that God would not forsake the blind. He would lead them into the light of understanding and bring the deaf to hear the truth (Isaiah 42:16; 43:18).

The blind and the deaf disciples would be led *despite* their self-opinionated stubbornness. This isn't because other people are more obstinate than them or because they are repentant. No, it is because they *belong* to God – they are his people. God is the God of rescue. He is the one who gives us a second change and bestows us with life.

St Mark ends his gospel with the good news that Jesus goes ahead of his disciples, even the rock headed Peter, who were still blind and faithless to a place where they will see and recognise him.

It is seeing and recognising the presence of Jesus in our lives that is the trigger which motivates us to share the good news of his love. Our mission today is no different to that of the original disciples after they saw the risen Jesus and recognised who he really is. Equally, the good news for us is that despite our flaws, weaknesses, bouts of self-centredness and periods of being ashamed of Jesus, there is forgiveness and reconciliation. We are still included in the mission of sharing the good news. God cannot force us to do so, it is our choice, but because we claim to know him, if we don't engage in the Church's mission, we risk his being ashamed of us on Judgement Day.

Happy Easter, Jesus is risen. Alleluia

Msgr Harry Entwistle
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