

Homily. Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday. 30/31 March 2024.

The women who went to the tomb early that Sunday morning were the same ones who, along with the other disciples, had followed Jesus during his ministry. They were also the women who from a distance had watched as Jesus suffered and died on the Cross. As far as St. Mark is concerned it was only these few women who had stood with Jesus through his public ministry and his death and burial. Now wonder, then, that they should be the ones most concerned with his full preparation in death.

Their plan was simple; To go his tomb and see him properly anointed with fragrant oils for his inevitable corruption. It seems that, in their desire to care for his corpse, they hadn't yet figured out who would roll back the big stone. Their action was one of love and respect, an impulse to do right by him at the end for him by whom so very much had been done wrong. We can only imagine their shock when they saw the heavy stone already pushed aside. Further shock ensued, for when they entered the tomb, the place of decay and death, a young man dressed in white was sitting on a rock burial ledge. God's heavenly messenger had appeared in the worst of human places, God's life and hope became present in the home of human death and hopelessness.

His message was clear to these faithful women; You can see where the crucified Jesus of Nazareth was laid to rest. He isn't here anymore. He has risen and is going before you to Galilee, just as he told you. Now, your mission is to go and tell this happy news to the other disciples and to Peter. St. Mark ends his Easter story by saying that the women fled from the tomb in terror and told no one of what they had seen or heard, but this

is a literary ploy, an authors trick to engage our mind and hearts. For, in the face of such astounding news how could silence be kept? What's more, if nothing was ever said, then what are we here for and doing now?

No, the good news was told and shared which is why we've been told it, too, generation after generation. The point here is that it's on us today to ensure that it keeps being told, lived, celebrated and passed on. This news in our ear and hands is the same message of the young man in white, the message of St. Paul that I quoted in my Palm Sunday homily. Remember: In the resurrection scheme of things, though hard for us to fully understand, we are all going to be changed and become immortal. Death has been swallowed up by triumphant Life ! Oh Death in all of your shapes and forms, who is afraid of you now? Life and won the battle.

Here is our rock, the foundation of our faith. It's the good news that we're involved in handing on to our newest members in these Easter Vigil Sacraments, the faith that we're affirming here and now. The big stone of finality and death has been forever rolled away, the clothes of the grave are left behind and the tomb is empty. Now, all of us are on a journey that never ends as we make our way to the joy and peace of Galilee where we will see for ourselves our Lord of Life who always calls us to himself.