

## Easter

5 4 15

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory.

Our text may be found in John's gospel chapter 11 and verse 25:

**'I am the resurrection and the life.'**

Jesus Christ is risen. *He is risen indeed. Alleluia !*

Happy Easter.

If you wanted to sum up what's special, what's unique about our faith as Christians, then we have only to point to the fact of Jesus. We have only to point to Jesus, the Son of God, the son of Mary, God made man, the Word made flesh, God born as a baby in the stable of an inn in Bethlehem; God who died for us on the cross on Good Friday; God who rose from the dead, today, some 2,000 years ago.

So if the birth and death and resurrection are special to us, what do they mean to us? Let's turn to today's gospel for an answer.

Mark's account is necessarily second-hand. He may well have been the young man who fled naked from the Garden of Gethsemane the night of Jesus' arrest but most of the time Mark just wasn't there – nor, of course, were we. Mark relies on Peter who, in this instance, relies on the women thought to have been there. According to all four gospels, one of them was Mary Magdalene. Mark also names Mary, the mother of Joses, and Salome. Three women come to the tomb, very early in the morning, when the Sabbath was over, bringing spices to anoint Jesus' body. The sun has risen so they have light to see what they want to do but the question they ask each other is, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' No problem; no sweat – when they get there, looking up, they see that the large stone has already been rolled back for them. Going into the tomb, they see a young man, dressed in white, sitting on the right side of where Jesus had been laid – but there is no Jesus there. Understandably, given the lad is an angel and Jesus' corpse is NOT in the tomb, the three women are frightened by what they see and by what they don't !

The angel speaks to them: "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." Understandably, the three are frightened, terrified. But the angel tells them the good news: Jesus has risen from the dead and he will be seen again by them as promised. So they should go and tell the others.

But what is special about Mark's account of the resurrection is at first they don't ! Mark's gospel today ends with verse eight: 'So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.'

In the original Greek, the last word Mark uses is the conjunction γάρ (gar) which in English means 'because' or 'for'. Now Mark's Greek may not have been the best in the world, and mine is non-existent, but in Greek, it is not correct to end a sentence with a conjunction. So if Mark does, then there must be a reason other than incompetence and Mark's reason may be that he is telling us the work is incomplete, the story unfinished. The work is not finished because it is now our turn to pass on the good news that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

So to return to my question 'Why is Easter special to us ?', the answer is simply the fact that Jesus us risen from the dead and that we as Christians have an unfinished task in front of us: to spread the good news – that through his resurrection, we have too have the promise of the life of the world to come !

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist*

*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

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