

The Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women

As the Creator and Author of All, Jesus Christ was not limited by His Laws of Nature. Indeed, from the beginning, when He became Man, although He voluntarily accepted to enter His time and space and assumed the human nature that He created, when He took flesh and became Man, He was never limited, encumbered, or restrained in any way. As in the Beginning, so it is in the End for the One Who is the Alpha and the Omega, the One Who is, was, and forever shall be, Christ, the Giver of Life, Who entered the present, as the Eternal Present, to reconcile past and future, and all things, in Him.

Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin. He came from the darkness and security of the Womb into the light and liberation without opening the gates of His Mother's womb. This was prophesied in the Old Testament, and fulfilled in Him Who is the fulfillment of the Law of Moses, the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Holy Theotokos' (The Birth Giver of God) gates remained closed forever, for her purpose was fulfilled; as the chosen, consecrated vessel of the Most High and Infinite God, she was preserved and sanctified forever, for through her womb, which could not contain the Uncontainable, salvation came to the world. As God's Love, Mercy, and Compassion for His creation could not be restrained, so His redemptive Life could not be held back either, and as His Life preserved her Virginity as It entered Her temple not made by human hands, so His life preserved Her Virginity, as It left that Sacred Temple to grant life to the world. These closed gates, mysteriously, sealed with Divine Authority His earthly ministry.

We believe that Jesus Christ is both perfectly God and perfectly Man, so, therefore, by definition of a man, He must be limited in time and space, suffer, and die. This He did for us voluntarily. Jesus took up all of our suffering and lifted it up on His Cross, so that through His Cross, we may be exalted with Him. His Hands and Feet were nailed to the Cross as Man, but His uncreated Love for humanity and His creation, manifested through His ecstatic, loving embrace, could not be restrained by man made nails. Stretched to His fullest extent, as Man, to the point of death upon the Cross, "like a pelican in the wilderness," as God, His Love could not be kept from His humanity-a humanity created, assumed, and redeemed.

But there was so much more. He endured the indignity, and ostensible finality and loss of death, burial, and the sealing of the Tomb. However, as both God and Man, as Theanthropos, He became the first in all things, so that He could become the First Fruits among the Dead to grant life to all, even those held captive in Hades. Descending from the Heights of His Creation, from His Heavenly Throne, He descended also to the very depths of His Creation into Hades, so that He could grant light, life, and liberation to those enclosed in darkness, death, and fetters. He destroyed Hades and Death, having brought His unconquerable Light, Life, and Freedom to darkness, death, and slavery. He lifted up Adam and Eve, and those held in the bondage of sin and darkness of death, for the darkness could not overcome the Light, and Death could not defeat the Life. The Invincible One annihilated Death by dying, shattered the shackles of sin, and the destroyed the gates of Hades.

Moreover, He sent forth His Message of the Hope and Promise of His Resurrection to the world through His Angel. His Angel announced to Mary Magdalene that her anointing of Jesus' Body foretold His Death which pointed to His Resurrection. As she did not leave His Side at the Cross, and was first to rise and go anoint His Body, she became the first to learn of His Resurrection and to become the "apostle to the apostles" to witness His Life Giving Tomb and His Resurrection. From the sealed Sepulcher that could not contain the Life of the World, He proclaimed, as if from His Pulpit, His Resurrection from the Dead. Through His Messenger, He reached out pastorally from His Tomb of Hope, Promise, and Redemption to Peter personally to assure Him that, in spite of his thrice denial, His Three Day Resurrection had redeemed Him, for God's Mercy and Compassion have no limits. Then God's Angel told Mary to tell His Disciples to meet Him in the Galilee of the Gentiles to foretell that His Good News of Eternal Salvation, through His Resurrection, was to go to the Hellenized Roman Empire, chosen to be the vehicle to transport this Good News to all peoples, in all places, and for all times.

Furthermore, His Love and forgiveness for His chosen Disciples would not be kept out by closed doors and windows. And as they were congregating and cringing in fear, depredation, and despair, the One, Who is the Hope of the Hopeless, and the Courage of the Faint of Heart, appeared to them with His very Real, Resurrected and Transfigured Body, showing them the unmistakable and irrefutable reality of a humanity assumed and a humanity assured of resurrection and transfiguration in the God Man, Jesus Christ, their Lord and Saviour. With His undeniable wounds, and new Unlimited Body, Jesus used Thomas to redeem himself from his doubt with his very own words: "My Lord, and My God!"

Thus, as from the beginning through the "Closed Gates of the Prince," through the nails of the Cross, the Burial, the sealed Tomb, the gates and locks of Hades, and the closed doors and windows of the upper room, Jesus comes to His beloved to heal, deliver, redeem, and save. Jesus is God. God is Love. Love is real and present through Jesus. And Love endures all, conquers all, and never fails. Thus, His Good News has come full circle, and as the circle of eternity and perfection is completed, so is His Plan for the salvation of the world, that His Empty Tomb proclaims through His woman disciples, Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of Joses, and Salome, the Holy Myrrh bearers, whom we commemorate today.

Yours in our Resurrected Lord, God, and Saviour, Jesus Christ,

†Father Jim