

Reflection for Easter Day. Matthew 28: 1-12

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After Jesus' high profile entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the week continues in a highly dramatic fashion, surpassing any Hollywood film script. There is tension and there is joy, but above all fear and trepidation. Jesus refuses to keep a low profile, appearing daily in the temple, teaching and healing, almost taunting the Chief priests and Elders who are anxious to do away with Him, to remove Him once and for all. Jesus' presence is too disturbing for them, but they fear the crowd. They fear His judgement and they fear the possibility of a riot.

Their answer is a snatch squad at the dead of night whilst Jesus and his followers are on the Mount of Olives. Jesus is dragged off to a trial of sorts in the house of the High priest and then in the morning taken to the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. Pilate wants to set Jesus free but the crowd call for His death. He too fears the crowd. Was this the same crowd that only a short time ago welcomed Jesus into the city? Were they the same people who would have backed an uprising but, disappointed, call for his death, or are they another group of people whipped up by the High Priests? We do not know, but the power of the crowd seals Jesus' fate. He is dragged off to a crucifixion full of its own drama.

That they thought was the end. That was what they wanted it to be - got rid of the troublemaker, finished, gone, done with, but not so.

In Matthew's telling of the events Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, presumably Jesus' mother, come to the tomb and are faced with an earthquake, the stone is rolled back by an angel who promptly sits on the stone. Those guarding the tomb are frozen by fear. The angel says to the women, "He is not here He has been raised from the dead!". Jesus is not in the tomb, He has been raised from the dead!. He is alive! The disciples summoned by the women then meet with the risen Jesus in the garden and worship Him. Jesus tells them to go to Galilee where He will see them again.

Jesus, the Son of God, worshipped by many, derided by some, nailed on a cross in the noon day sun and left to die a painful ignominious death, his body left in a tomb rises from the dead, Jesus comes back to life. The risen Jesus meets and talks with people. This is no mere figment of the imagination, no conjuring trick. Jesus has gone willingly to death but by His resurrection shows us another way. Death is not the end, life eternal waits for us all. Jesus has destroyed the power of death and sin by his rising to life.

Alleluia Christ is risen; He is risen indeed Alleluia!

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son over-came 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 to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. Amen