

Lenten Devotional Reflection
12 April 2020 (Easter Day)

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹ After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.” ⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Message

Easter Sunday is the climax and completion of the Lenten season of vigil, abstain and prayer. Yet, for many Christians this year will be the first time that we could not gather together for the service with the proclamation of the joy of Easter by saying: “Hallelujah, Christ is risen!” In the time of the coronavirus pandemic, for the last few months, we have been forced to restrain our daily activities to a near haunt. Thus, we all eagerly long for the time of relieving us from fear and those precaution measures by loudly shouting out “Indeed, He is risen.”

Under this circumstances, reading the account of St. Matthew about Jesus’ resurrection reminds us that the first Easter was not celebrated in public in the great Temple, but rather in an early morning deep silence at the grave. Also, two women whom were deprived by the society became the first two witnesses who encountered the risen Lord. They were among those women who followed Jesus from Galilee and kept looking on Jesus’ crucifixion from a distance (cf. Matthew 27:55). However, even after Jesus’ burial, everyone went away, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb (cf. Matthew 27:61). Finally, on the first day of the week, darkness was still there. In spite of the obstacles and challenges, their whole-hearted and true devotion to Jesus empowered them strong enough to come to the tomb which were encircled by the Roman soldiers. Their steadfast faith in Jesus have overcome the fear of death and transformed fear and sorrow deep in their hearts into action with hope

and power.

Today, in every part of the world, the suppressing fear of death is surrounding us. Every day, many people lose their loving ones. Some even do not have the chance to console them by saying the final farewell and cannot attend their funeral services. We are all facing the unpredictable coming of sudden death. Out of human weakness, the world tries to avoid and runaway from death by many social policies. However, Easter tells us how did the two women at the tomb turned their fear into joy by the encountering of the risen Lord. So, in the darkness of hopelessness, let us meditate Jesus' suffering and death with a hope shared by the two witnesses---a hope springs out from the mystery that he has destroyed the realm of death by resurrection. In the presence of risen Lord, like the two women in v. 9, we could worship Him with reverence and humility in Easter's joy of life and freedom.

Reflection

1. Which words and acts of Jesus are always on your mind?
2. Remember how did you get through with someone when he or she was facing death with the hope of eternal life.
3. Pray to our risen Lord for His bringing of joy and eternal life.

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