



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Easter Sunday 2021
Reading St Mark 16: 1-8
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Doubtless, we know the Easter story so well and yet ... do we? Each Gospel gives its own perspective helpful for our faith. In Mark's Gospel we join the women at day break walking to the tomb. They had noted its location carefully, when Joseph of Arimathea had placed Jesus' body there after his crucifixion. Now, with the Sabbath restrictions over, their one aim is to attend to the body of their dead Lord and anoint it, according to their custom. They have, however, a seemingly immovable obstacle to overcome "Who will roll away the stone for us?"

The stone. When do we ever both to consider the stone? After all we know what happens next, so who cares about the stone? Let's pause for a moment seeing into the minds of the women. The stone marks finality, beyond it is a body, all life extinct. They can no longer speak to their Lord, it is the end of their hope and joy, even so they go faithfully to honour him. Then at the tomb, they find the stone already rolled away. Initial relief most likely turned to concern, who had done it? Was there someone in the tomb and, if yes, friend or foe? Even then, they do not draw back but with courage and devotion, they step inside.

Then, instead of a body in a shroud, they see a young man in a gleaming white robe who is very much alive! He talks reassuringly to them but they are afraid. He tells them that their Lord whom they seek is alive and has gone ahead of them back to Galilee, the place where his ministry and mission began: things, seemingly, have gone full circle. They are told to share this news with the disciples. They don't of course, they flee, in sheer terror.

But why are they not ecstatic with joy? The reason is mind-bending and they need time to process it. They had been brought up to believe the scriptures that inform, to see God is to die. Yet, with Christ's resurrection they comprehend that they had been following God, in Jesus, day by day and lived! No more need death be feared. This is a new kind of relationship with God: he's still with them and before them to pave the way to life in all its fulness.

What about us on this Easter Day? Do we have stones rolled over our hearts limiting life in all its fulness? Grief? Health issues? Pride? Spiritual uncertainty? All these can take away from the freedom the Gospel seeks to bring. Once the stone was rolled away on that Easter Day light flooded the darkness of unknowing bringing certainty – Christ is risen! He has conquered the immovable barrier of physical and spiritual death and we are the beneficiaries of this eternal freedom. The determination of the women on that Easter Day showed that though the task they imagined would be impossible yet they believed it could be done. Let us pray for the courage to believe in the truth of Easter Day. Amen