

# Sunday

Who will roll away the stone? - Wilna de Beer

*Mark 16:1 - 8*

The three women in the text above wanted to go and anoint the body of Jesus with spices. As they were walking, they wondered amongst themselves: “Who will roll the stone away?”

As they looked up they saw that the stone was rolled away in front of the cave and when they went inside, they found an angel there, clothed in white robes, who told them that Jesus has risen.

The women walked to the cave knowing that there would be a very heavy stone in front of the cave, and probably nobody around to help them roll it away, except the guard. This didn't stop them from going, though. They knew that their Lord's body would have decayed for two days already. That didn't stop them either. They knew that their hearts would break again and they would relive the tragedy of his crucifixion, when they saw him lying there. The thought of that and what they would find in the cave didn't keep them from preparing their spices, gathering their things, and walking to that cave very early on Sunday morning.

How improbable it would seem that they would be met there not by a decaying body but by an angel, telling them that Jesus has risen? How frightened and unsure they must have felt at the thought that Jesus' body is not there anymore. He has risen! They might have asked themselves: “What does that even mean?” And they ran away from there frightened and bewildered.

It reminds me of the uncertainty and unreal reality of the time we live in currently – as if it could be a figment of our imagination, as if we are looking through a telescope from the wrong end, and seeing a distorted picture of the world we knew. And yet, it is because of this moment that we are starting to see reality as we never knew it or acknowledged it, and through this painful revelation we realize the hope in the midst of death. For the first time we are questioning why as humanity we have allowed people to die of hunger when globally we are able to work together to fight a virus; why have we allowed people to be homeless when there are so many alternatives? Why have we allowed ourselves to be bought by the Market and all it stands for? The new hope arises from the ashes of our failures as society.

The death and resurrection of Jesus is a mystery. The role of God in this COVID-19 pandemic is mysterious. We can only guess as we see glimpses of His presence, as we go through moments of complete desolation and hopelessness, and as we cry out with joy when we experience unthinkable acts of kindness and generosity.

It seems as if we are walking towards that cave, the grave, the final stop, the place where all hope is lost. However, in the midst of what could be the deepest crisis of our life-time, we have a reason to walk with courage and determination. We know that every person taken into a shelter at a time like this, that every substance user who gets a chance for treatment now, and that every act of care and compassion, is a step we take with God in rolling away the stone – to reveal that Christ has risen and has overcome death!

It is in the walking that we are overcoming death with Christ. We do not know what the future holds and we might despair and feel anxious at times, but we surrender to the mysterious Christ who cried out on our behalves already: “It is done!”

**Please pray with me:**

Lord, we kneel before you, as we surrender ourselves fully to You. Your love for the most vulnerable in the world will propel us forward and keep us on track, when we sometimes fumble, delay, doubt and become paralyzed with fear. Your strength will hold us upright when we get tired, frustrated, and angry. Your beautiful face will be before us when we wonder where is the love? That is why we surrender fully and give ourselves to You. You are rolling the stone away, You have overcome death, and therefore we want to walk with you as we co-create a world where Love has the last word.

*Amen.*