

Easter Vigil – Easter Day 2009 Year B Mark 16:1-8

1. Some of you might remember from Palm Sunday,
 - a. I have been spending a fair amount of time watching Late - Night TV.
 - b. The other night I caught the last half hour of the movie “Sex in the City ”
2. Now some of you are gasping, “Father, you watched THAT ????”
 - a. To which I have to say well, yes,
 - b. I watched it because
 - i. I remembered they had filmed it right across the street
 - ii. because it had been popular with a group of my female friends.
 - iii. And because frankly I wondered what the fuss was all about.
3. And when those friends heard that I had seen this movie,
 - a. They all wanted to know what I, *the priest*, thought about it.
 - b. I have to be honest.
 - i. All I could do was shrug and say, “I dunno.
 - ii. Never saw the TV show,
 - iii. Only came in on the end of the movie;
 - iv. Seemed nice, but I don’t get what all the fuss is about.”
 - c. This was heresy to my friends because
 - i. This story of a group of young well - dressed New York women named Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda
 1. Had taught them AND MANY OTHER WOMEN
 2. to live for themselves and
 3. Had changed their lives.
4. But I share this exchange with you because it reminded me of another exchange I overheard, one Easter morning about 12 years ago.
 - a. I was standing in the back of church
 - b. When a group of young well - dressed women walked out
 - c. And as they left, one of them said to the others, “See what did I tell you? Every year we come here and every year it’s the same old thing; Jesus, resurrection – blah blah blah!”
 - i. Obviously they had never bothered to hear the whole story,
 - ii. Always came in on the end,
 - iii. And while it seemed nice, they didn’t get what the fuss was about.
5. This encounter would have been laughable; if it weren’t so common.
 - a. This Easter churches are filled with people who come every year
 - b. Hear the story of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
 - c. And leave wondering what the fuss is all about.
6. Alan Jones, the former Dean of Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco
 - a. tells the story about a card he received from a parishioner
 - b. which illustrates this reality all too well:
 - c. On the outside was a picture of Jesus on the cross.
 - d. At its foot is an Easter bunny offering Jesus an Easter egg.
 - e. Inside it said “Have an egg; you’ll feel better.” Happy Easter.
7. Whoever had sent that card
 - a. Obviously had no idea of the whole story,

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- b. And obviously did not get it either either.
- 8. Mark however, will not let that happen.
- 9. Not even to those of us who only come in on the end of the story,
 - a. as we do this night/today.
- 10. For according to Mark on that first Easter morning
 - a. a group of women approached the graveyard where on Friday last,
 - b. Jesus was hastily buried.
- 11. Their names are not Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda:
- 12. But Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome.
 - a. We are forced to look back into the story to discover that the Mary's and Salome were disciples;
 - i. They were present with Jesus at the Crucifixion
 - ii. They were present at his burial
 - iii. And now they came to care for his hastily buried body.
 - b. What a nice ending to a sad story!
 - c. We almost expect a bunny to pop up from behind a flower and say "Have an egg, you'll feel better."
- 13. We obviously don't get it: But Mark did:
 - a. In a world that was RULED by men,
 - i. These were women
 - b. In a world were Jesus' male disciples abandoned him out of fear of arrest,
 - i. These women stayed
 - 1. Even though they risked that same arrest
 - c. In a world where only men were trusted
 - i. These women were the first to hear the news of resurrection
 - ii. The first to hear that he would meet them again
 - iii. The first to be given the responsibility to witness about that resurrection to others.
- 14. These three women came to that tomb that morning because they KNEW the rest of the story; because in Jesus they had not just met some nice guy
 - a. They encountered a man
 - i. That did not rule them,
 - ii. Did not discount their faithfulness
 - iii. Nor dismiss their trust
- 15. But treated them as sisters, as disciples, as equals
- 16. So that their presence at that empty tomb that morning
 - a. was every bit as much a scandal to the first people who heard it
 - b. as it would have been for us had I said that the women at the tomb were not named Mary, Mary and Salome,
 - i. but Carrie, Samantha, Charlotte and Miranda.
- 17. Jesus had changed their lives far more
 - a. than Sex in the City
 - i. or any of the men encountered in that movie ever could;
- 18. For Jesus had freed them

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- a. not to live for themselves, but for others.
 - b. And that new life they got from him
 - c. was the way Jesus' resurrection was first felt in the lives of those who followed him.
19. And we would know that;
- a. If we didn't always come in at the end,
 - b. Looking for the egg,
 - c. And wondering afterwards what the fuss is all about.
20. And we still can.
21. A week ago I told everyone that we Christians have work to do.
- a. I told them to take the Palm they just got back home,
 - b. To put it behind the crucifix hanging in their house
 - c. And remember the fact that Jesus was a different kind of King,
 - d. Whose life and death taught us that to live was to give, and get.
22. Well this morning that work continues:
- a. Go home and Remember Mark's story we have heard this week;
 - i. A story of fear and death
 - ii. Of betrayal and abandonment
 - b. That we try to make better here at the end
 - i. with our banal greetings of "Happy Easter"
 - ii. and of course our colored eggs.
23. Because we do not hang around enough to hear the rest of the story
- a. About how that man named Jesus still meets people In this place and places like it:
 - i. People who think that life is determined by what we have rather than how we love.
 - ii. People afraid like the disciples were
 - iii. Oppressed like those women were
 - iv. And he challenges them, teaches them, forgives them and frees them; so they can do the same for others.
 - b. Remember that; and then next week come back; because Easter isn't the end to the story – It is really only the end of the beginning.
 - c. Next week the story continues.