

**APRIL 12 (EASTER SUNDAY)
MATTHEW 28:1-10**

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After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And 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. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then 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.' ⁸So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

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The angel cares nothing for the soldiers - this show of earthly power is of no concern to the heavenly essence. His comfort is for the women; Jesus most faithful friends - the ones who arrive early and stay late. 'Don't be afraid,' he says. Go tell the others. Tell them that expectations are upset and death is conquered and Jesus is risen.

The women are relieved, but not convinced. Fear and joy are theirs in equal measure, and that's a good lesson for us. We have heard the Easter refrain - "Christ is Risen - He is Risen indeed!" - and today we can admit to feeling fear and joy in almost equal measure, for our expectations have been upset, and things aren't as they once were. \

And maybe that's the point.

No more 'same-old-same-old;' no more 'we've never done it that way before!' A brave new world is upon us, and will change us for the better, if we let it. Death is ever-present, and we are learning (as if for the first time) how to co-exist with the constant threat of our mortality. And on the rubble of our former lives, there sits today God's messenger: "Do NOT be afraid. The thing you've come to expect - well, it's different now. But Christ is risen nonetheless. Go and tell. Be relieved. Do not be afraid."

This Easter revelation will dawn on each of us in a different way this year. Without pomp and circumstance; without noisy family gatherings; without the excess of food and frivolity. It turns out that none of those things are necessary for God to triumph - for Jesus to rise.

Christ is risen - he is risen indeed. Whispered or shouted; spoken or sung; in full liturgical vestments, or in bathrobe and slippers; the truth is the truth. Easter is Easter.

Hear the Good News. Tell the good news.

A Blessed Easter to you all.

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Joyful, jubilant God

Today your peace is present - today, your message is as clear as a prairie sky.

Death does not have the last word. Life is ours - abundant and eternal - for Jesus is risen, and our tears have turned to laughter.

Bring such joy to us that we might be relieved of our burdens of anxiety and fear.

Bring hope to us in this time of uncertainty.

Bring a change in us and through us that the world might never be the same.

Let it soon be so.

Hallelujah!

Amen

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Be assured of the Peace that God has promised,
which is yours now and always through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.