



Daily Reflections

January 25, 2021

Scripture

Mark 16:15-18

And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.

Our Scripture Reflection

Today's Gospel text from Mark features the commission of the Apostles shortly after Our Lord's resurrection. When we think of missionary work we become concerned that we just can't drop everything to go out into the world and witness to Jesus. Relax. Some of the most important, challenging and perhaps difficult missionary territory we will ever cover is within the four walls in which we live!

Food for your Journey

If you were to create a new religion that had at its center a testimony of how God has visited the earth -- and if you wanted to make it as convincing as possible -- how would you craft your story? You'd want to start with absolute certainty: God turning up in some unmistakably public place -- let's say, giving a speech at the United Nations. The 24-hour news networks would pick it up

right away. God's speech would be bounced off dozens of satellites so people the world over could view it in real time.

You'd want to roll out a few miracles, too -- big ones. God showed Moses how to part the Red Sea. You'd at least want a dry footpath between New York and London this time around. Water from a rock? How about a river bursting out of the Grand Canyon? The U.S. Navy has its Blue Angels precision flying team. You'd want some real angels to show up, trailing stardust in their wake, flying circles around the fighter jets.

As for special effects, you'd spare no expense. The general public is pretty jaded about movie special effects by now, having seen everything the CGI artists can offer. They've watched Harry Potter zooming around on his broomstick, and giant alien spaceships blowing up the White House with a death ray. You'd need something really splashy!

If that's so, isn't it a wonder how poorly put-together are the gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection? Each gospel's got its own version: and none of them agree on every detail. Some of them even contradict each other.

Strangest of all is Mark's version. At its heart is a whole lot of nothing -- an empty tomb.

"Sorry, you missed it," say the angels to the women, standing there slack-jawed in astonishment. "He's already come and gone. If you start right now for Galilee, you just might catch up with him!"

No, if you were going to create your own story of God coming to earth in human form, then dying and rising again, that's not how you'd write it.

Which is exactly the point: a mysterious, incomprehensible resurrection story is one that's far more likely to be true!

A Prayer from the Heart

Risen and Glorious Lord, Cleanse my heart of all sin, worry and selfishness. Give me all the Grace I need to witness to Your saving power in my life and in this world. In doing so, may I draw people to You. Amen