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Easter Sunday – Year B  
Acts 10.34-43  
1 Corinthians 15.1-11  
Mark 16.1-8

In the name of the one, true, and living God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

“So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.”

So why are you here? If they went out and fled from the tomb, and said nothing to anyone, why are you here in church this Easter morning? I realize for some of you it's because your parent, or your spouse, or your child said, in no uncertain terms, that you would be in church this morning. But why are you here? Why are you really here?

I suspect that some of you are curious. Whether you actually believe that Jesus rose from the dead, you're curious about what all the fuss is about. Tomorrow is April Fool's Day, and you're wondering if perhaps the resurrection is just a big hoax. But billions of people around the world are celebrating Jesus' resurrection today, and you don't want to be left out! You're curious about how something that happened 2000 years ago can influence, excite, and hold sway over so many people today. What's more astounding is that we even know what happened 2000 years ago, especially since, as we heard, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome “fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.”

What a bad ending to a great story! You know stories. You probably like to hear stories, and read stories, and tell stories. You know stories share something in common – all stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. And the ending is usually the most exciting part! So this ending, with the women saying nothing to anyone, is a bad

ending. Actually, the original Greek phrase in Mark's Gospel says the women told nothing to no one, which is a double negative, and makes for bad grammar, in English at least, if not in Greek, as well as for a bad ending.

The story started well enough. There was this charismatic figure named Jesus who went about the countryside dynamically preaching, clearly teaching, healing the sick, and performing other miracles. He brought good news to the poor, proclaimed release to the captives, restored sight to the blind, and let the oppressed go free. He acquired a large following. So large, in fact, that it worried the authorities, and they looked for ways to limit his power. When Jesus started to say that he was the Son of God and a new Kingdom was going to rule the earth, the authorities got even more worried, and made up an excuse to put him to death. They hung him on a cross, and after an agonizingly long time, he slowly suffocated and died.

But we know that's not the end. It's not the end of Jesus and it's not the end of the story. We're expecting a great ending to the story. Mary Magdalene, and Mary, and Salome bought spices to anoint Jesus' body to complete the rites of burial. They go to the tomb early in the morning after the sun had risen – the Bible spells sun, S-U-N, but I like to think of it as “after the Son, S-O-N, had risen, that is, God's Son had risen” – as a bit of play on words. Nevertheless, the women reach the tomb, the stone had already been mysteriously rolled away, and when they go inside, a young man tells them that Jesus, whom they're looking for, has been raised from the dead. He isn't there, but he's gone ahead of them to Galilee. So they flee the tomb in terror and amazement, and they say nothing to anyone because they're afraid.

What would make you flee from that tomb? What makes you flee from the tombs of your own life – those dark places that trap you? Do you flee because of your fear of death? Do you flee because of your amazement at the resurrection? Do you flee because you're afraid that nobody will believe you? Do you flee because miracles just don't happen? "And they...fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone." What a bad ending! Or is it?

Actually, it's not the ending at all! That's one ending of the story in Mark's Gospel, and perhaps the most ancient. There's another ending to Mark's Gospel, dating from around the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in which the women tell Jesus' other followers what they've seen and heard. And there's another earlier ending to Mark's Gospel, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, in which Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene, Jesus appears to two of his followers as they are walking in the country, and Jesus commissions his followers to go into all the world and proclaim Jesus' good news to the whole creation. And even if we accept the original ending to Mark's Gospel – remember that Greek double negative that the women said nothing to no one? – well, in English, a double negative makes a positive! In other words, the women said something to someone!

And that's how we heard the story. The story has been passed down from generation to generation for 2000 years. The story of Jesus' good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed, and victory over sin and death by rising to life again, is just too good to keep it a secret. The story has been passed down just like the young man in the tomb told Mary Magdalene, Mary, and Salome: Go and tell his other followers that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you. Jesus earlier had told his followers

that after he was raised up, he would go before them to Galilee, but they hadn't understood what he meant.

It makes sense. Jesus and his followers were going back to Galilee. That's where this story starts. That's where people began to follow Jesus. That's where Jesus performed his first miracles. That's where Jesus' followers were commissioned for ministry and start spreading the good news of Jesus Christ, who by his death and rising again to life saves and redeems the world.

If you're still curious and you want to know more, come back next week and you can start filling in the story. You can hear about Jesus' miracles. You can find out why people want to follow Jesus. You can discover how Jesus wants to lead you into telling the story. You may experience terror and amazement, but I guarantee you that you won't want to say nothing to no one! And that's a triple negative, meaning you'll want to tell everything to everyone! So come back here to this Galilee where Jesus is going ahead of you. Here you will see him, just as he told you. Here you will experience his Real Presence in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Here you will see him in the faces of those who behold him. Here you will hear his words in God's Holy Word.

Perhaps it's not such a bad ending after all! Instead, it's really a new beginning!

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!