

THE FIRST 15

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

Today is Tuesday, April 2 and we are exploring what the Bible says about the Risen Christ.

OPENING PRAYER

Holy and blessed Lord, I long for you to speak into my life and circumstances. As I begin this time of prayer, I still my body, quiet my mind and slow my breathing. I inhale the joy and peace of your loving presence. I exhale the worries and concerns I have carried with me. Give me ears to hear, eyes to see and a heart to understand the good message you have for me today as I study your Holy Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. Now I have told you.” So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Matthew 28:5-8

REFLECTION

This week we are revisiting the story of the Risen Christ from the perspective of each Gospel writer. Today we read from the Gospel of Matthew. Three days passed following the death of Jesus the Messiah. On the third day, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and rolled back the enormous stone which sealed the entrance to his tomb. The angel's clothes were described to be as white as snow and his appearance was as bright as a flash of lightning. The heavenly being sat high upon the disk-like stone. A violent earthquake shook the city of Jerusalem and was felt for miles. The soldiers assigned to guard the tomb trembled with fear and collapsed to the ground. As the sun rose, three faithful women came carrying spices to peer inside Christ's burial place.

As I read today's scripture, I listen for what God is saying to me about the empty tomb. I hear the startling voice of the bright shining angel. Whatever worry, fear or anxiety I bring with me, the angel of God speaks it away. "Do not be afraid," he declares. Jesus is not here. Jesus has already gone ahead of me into my future, preparing things for when I arrive. I am filled with joy and am ready to run forward into my day. Quickly, I hurry with anticipation to see Jesus. He will come and meet me in my mundane circumstances. Will I recognize him in the sacred moments of today's ordinariness?

I invite the Holy Spirit to speak afresh into my heart as I read Matthew's words of encounter at the empty tomb. I long to hear the voice of Jesus leading and guiding my life. I anticipate meeting Jesus in the ordinary circumstances and personal encounters of this upcoming day. Perhaps I have been looking for Jesus in the wrong places and God wants to send me somewhere new. Maybe I have misunderstood something Jesus said or forgotten an important

teaching. Perhaps I am to go to a certain place or a certain person and declare Christ's love and salvation.

Ask: Where might I expect to meet Jesus in the day ahead? How can I pay attention and look for his presence?

Pause and Pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed Lord Jesus, I seek you as a new day begins. Fill my heart with joy as I remember your resurrection. Encourage me to quickly tell others that you are the Risen Christ. Give me your instructions and guide the activities of each hour. Go ahead of me into each situation and every conversation and work all things together for good. Reveal the places in my life where negativity, doubt or disbelief remain. Open the eyes of my heart and help me discover where you are already at work so I can join you there. Meet me in my circumstances so that I may worship you. Amen.