

EASTER SUNDAY – March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013

**WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?– Biblical Commentary by  
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***Luke 24,1-12***

***But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.***

“ *Why do you seek the living among the dead? ? He is not here, but has risen.*” This is the Easter message. And we give this greeting and we do it on this day of Easter. But let’s see the verses of the evangelist telling of the experience of the resurrection on the behalf of the women that had observed the commandment of the Sabbath before going to the tomb.

The evangelist means that the observation of the laws slows down or prevents the experience of the risen Christ. So it is a very stern warning that the evangelist gives. One accepts the new Jesus or one remains with the old. Jesus has come to propose a new alliance and this must be accepted in its entirety. Jesus’ wine cannot be put into old wine skins from the previous tradition.

So, the women go to the tomb, they find the stone has been removed and two men appear to them. These two men have already been presented in the episode of the transfiguration and they are Moses and Elijah. Moses the great lawmaker and Elijah the great prophet.

And their presence wants to make us understand once again that the scripture, all the scripture, are to be interpreted in the light of Jesus. It is actually these two men that reproach the women: “*Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.*” It is a very important teaching that the evangelist gives us.

With Jesus death does not interrupt life, but permits the growth of a new form, full and definite. Death does not take our dear ones from us, but makes them nearer to us. Theirs is not an absence, but a presence, Therefore this announcement is important: death does not interrupt life.

It continues remembering that Jesus had already spoken of this in Galilee, but the evangelist modifies Jesus' words. The evangelist in fact writes: *"..that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."*

In Galilee Jesus had not spoken of sinful men, he had spoken of elders, high priests and scribes, that is the members of the Sanhedrin, the highest juridical body of Israel. Now, after Jesus' death, they become qualified as sinners, Sinners not those that have broken the law, those that are not able to observe all the dictates of the law, but are – and the evangelists complaint is tremendous - the very people that claim to represent God.

Those that present themselves or pretend to be the representatives of God actually they are sinners, because they have put their interests before the interests of others, their own convenience before the welfare of others. For this they have killed Jesus, for their own convenience.

And the evangelist gets rid of them with this expression "sinful men". Well these women hearing these words remember what Jesus had said and go themselves – even if at that time they were considered the furthest from God - they go to proclaim, doing the same work, the same activity as the angels, they that bring the announcement to the eleven. The apostles have been evangelized by the women.

The women's roll in Luke's Gospel is very important, they are the women that announce to the men that life is stronger than death, but the men do not believe them. The evangelist denounces a masculine and misogynistic mentality, and his comment is severe: *"..but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."*

Women, because Sarah had replied to God with an innocent lie, were not considered credible. Their testimony was not valid. And the men, the eleven, despite Jesus' teaching, despite Jesus had accepted in His followers women, that here appear as Mary Magdalene and Joanna, they are still conditioned by this mentality. Therefore , when the women are the carriers of a message of life that is stronger than death, this message does not have any effect, conditioned by the masculine mentality, of the misogynistic group of men that follow Jesus .

There is an exception. Peter, who also is part this group, sets off towards the tomb, but finds the tomb empty. At the tomb there is nothing to see. Now there is only the word to listen to, to accept and let it flourish in their own lives.

Best wishes for a Happy Easter