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## “Could you not watch one hour with Me?”

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their unbelief and hardness of heart ... and said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.’” (Mk 16:12-15)

We priests are minister of Christ. We are supposed to be familiar with Him. We are called over to the other side of life and stay with Him through the *Liturgy of the Hours* in a permanent prayer-relationship, always “in contact with God” - like the angels!

We too have to bring the message of light to this world like the angel after Good Friday, all the more as the world darkens. We have to be one with Christ and, like the angels and with their help, messengers of the victory of the Risen Christ. This is the only reason for our existence in this world, the only “news” worth listening to, the *kerygma*!

It is the great message of the call to the new life “on the other side” of death, a message which is not our own but comes from a higher source and authority! That is the reason why we priests need to be close to the Lord, why our mission is an ‘angelic’ mission; why we too should be, like the angels, radiant, joyful, positive, optimists, why we are expected to be “bearers of light”, the truth, why we are expected to have angelic courage, confidence as we are sent to announce with transparency Christ’s victory over evil. The preacher’s task is, as this gospel shows us, angelic and requests great men – priests in union with the holy angels.

#### 4. Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

It is a high goal, this realization that we are called to live an angelic mission. – Greater still is our call to represent Christ on the altar, in the administration of the sacraments! Yet, each call coalesces in the truth that we are called to holiness, so that Christ’s grace and glory shine through our ministries.

Fr. Titus Kieninger  
ORC

Mark your calendar for the retreat in Holly, MI: November 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### ASSOCIATION OF PRIESTS IN THE WORK OF THE HOLY ANGELS®

164 Apollo Rd. SE, Carrollton, OH USA    www.opusangelorum.org  
Tel (313) 527-1739    frtitus@opusangelorum.org

Rector: Fr. Ludwig M. Oppl, ORC ©2015 Order of the Holy Cross

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## Association of Priests In Opus Angelorum®

“Entering the tomb, they saw a young man” (Mk 16:5)    XXII, April 2015

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#### Dear Brothers in the Priesthood!

In recent letters, our attention was directed to the end of time, which stands in a certain analogy to the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. With respect to the Passion, St. Mark does not refer to the Angels, whereas St. Matthew records the answer of Jesus to Peter’s inclination to act violently with the sword: “Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father and He will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Mt 26:53). St. Luke, of course, narrates the presence of the Angel who strengthened Jesus in His agony (cf. Lk 22:43). St. John, for his part, recalls Jesus’ answer to Pilate wherein he refers indirectly to the heavenly army: “If my kingdom were of this world, *my servants* would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from the world.” (Jn 18:36).

The next text in the Gospel of St. Mark referring to the angels comes in the narration of the Resurrection of Jesus, His entrance into the “new life” (cf. Mk 16:1-8).

#### 1. “They saw a young man”

The women went to the tomb early on Sunday morning. This was important to them. As soon as “the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him” (Mk 16:1). On the way to the tomb they were troubled, “saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?’” (v. 3) Upon arriving at the tomb they were astonished for “looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back – it was very large” (v. 4).

What happened? Why? And who did it? Is the body of Jesus still there?

They entered, and “saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed” (v. 5).

#### a) The Encounter of heaven and earth

We are not so much accustomed anymore to be amazed although we don’t miss surprises. Joining these women, stepping back a bit and taking in the scene from “afar”, we might be amazed as they were. These woman (in the name of humanity) are full of good will and long for redemption. Notwithstanding, their expecta-

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tion is marked by limitations, poverty and incapacity, especially in face of the gruesome death Christ had suffered before their eyes scarcely two full days before. Man is created and called for the life-hereafter, and longs for it, but how is he to get there? It is no secret that he is unable to reach his goal by himself, and therefore, it is necessary that someone from “the other side” of the border has to come and call him or bring him the means to achieve his goal.

This is the situation, in which the women find themselves at the tomb of Jesus: Mankind seeking, but incapable of success; his hopes shattered and buried in the tomb. And now, here sits an angel, calm and tranquil, in human form, juvenile, and yet secure and with a certain solemnity, “a young man ... dressed in a white robe”.

First, the fact of the angel’s presence, then his appearance also amazed the women. The angel appeared as a “man”, symbol of messenger, active, sent by someone (the contrary would be receptivity represented by woman). Then this angel is “young”, (indicative of vitality, strength and agility). He is “dressed in a white robe” of feasting and jubilation (not in mourning, like the women). Though angel appeared in human form, still, all things taken together, it is clearly an apparition and it causes the women to be amazed. There are several reasons that coalesce here:

- The angel needed to make manifest to them that he is coming from “the other side” of life, from where man's heart tends to go, but is unable to go alone.
- The pure, immortal nature of the angel requires an apparition expressive of his heavenly mission and origin, so as to better dispose them to believe his message. Does the fact that he was “sitting on the right side” suggest his authority, the certainty (‘ex cathedra’) of his message, or perhaps, the secure peace Christ’s victory brings.
- The immensity of his message similarly required that it be exteriorly underscored by a special, solemn appearance as by the “white robe”.

### **b) He clarifies the situation**

The angel took the word and spoke to the women.

He first took away the “shock” about his presence - “Do not be amazed” (v. 6). This was necessary, for St. Mark recorded: “trembling and astonishment had come upon them” (v. 8), so much so that “they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid,” even though the angel had instructed them to go and announce the resurrection to the disciples!

Then, the angel gained the women's confidence when he referred to their intention: “You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.” This is a very sober statement, just placing the fact “on the table”. This opens the minds of the women, they are attentive and will not miss what he will tell them.

“He has risen!” - what does this mean? Do they understand this? Are the next words an answer? “He is not here;” this is clear, this they see, “see the place where they laid him.” (v. 6). Yes, but where is He?

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After having cleared the present fact, not giving a deeper explanation, just making sure to have the same basis, the angel points to the future: “But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you” (v. 7). This seems to be a prophesy, there is a door open towards “tomorrow” while all around them seems to be dark, broken down and without hope ... But it should not have been news because “he told you.” Jesus Himself foretold the disciples different times what happened the last days, inclusively now His resurrection on the third day (cf. Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34).

Nevertheless, the women “went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.” Only when Mary Magdalene met Jesus Himself, did she go to the disciples and bring them the news (cf. v. 9-11).

### **2. The Church “will follow her Lord in His ... Resurrection”**

As we have already reflected at length about the detailed description of the encounter of the women with “the Angel of the Resurrection” in St. Matthew (a text very similar to this passage of St. Mark, with just very few differences) we may herewith conclude our reflections on the gospel of St. Mark. Still, proceeding from this final vision, it is opportune look a bit beyond the gospel narration towards our life today.

Christ ended his life – in the eyes of the disciples and of the world – he was simply dead on the cross and His body was “put away” in a tomb. Today it seems that the hour has come, when the Church “will follow her Lord in His death and Resurrection” (CCC 677). Doubts and fear spread more and more. Many are inclined to apply the words of Jesus in Gethsemane to themselves: “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here and watch!” (Mk 14:34)

Mass media sows so many doubts in souls. There is the threat from outside, a threat which points to life and death. Members of the Hierarchy seem to waiver and confuse others. Many presume to make their own rules and ‘pontificate’ about what God wants or does not want.

With threats from outside and no security from within, such that each is confronted with the question: “Do I also want to leave?” (cf. Jn 6:67) – Then in Gethsemane “all forsook Him, and fled” (Mk 14:50). The darkest hours began and ended with Christ’s abandonment on the Cross: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” In that hour of darkness the Spirit was at work; while Christ’s enemies preserved their hardness of heart, others repented, and like the Centurion came to the faith, “and the centurion who stood over against him, seeing that crying out in this manner he had given up the Spirit, said: Indeed this man was the son of God.” (Mk 15:34,39).

### **3. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel!”**

Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene and thereafter to two of the disciples, and finally “to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; He upbraided them for