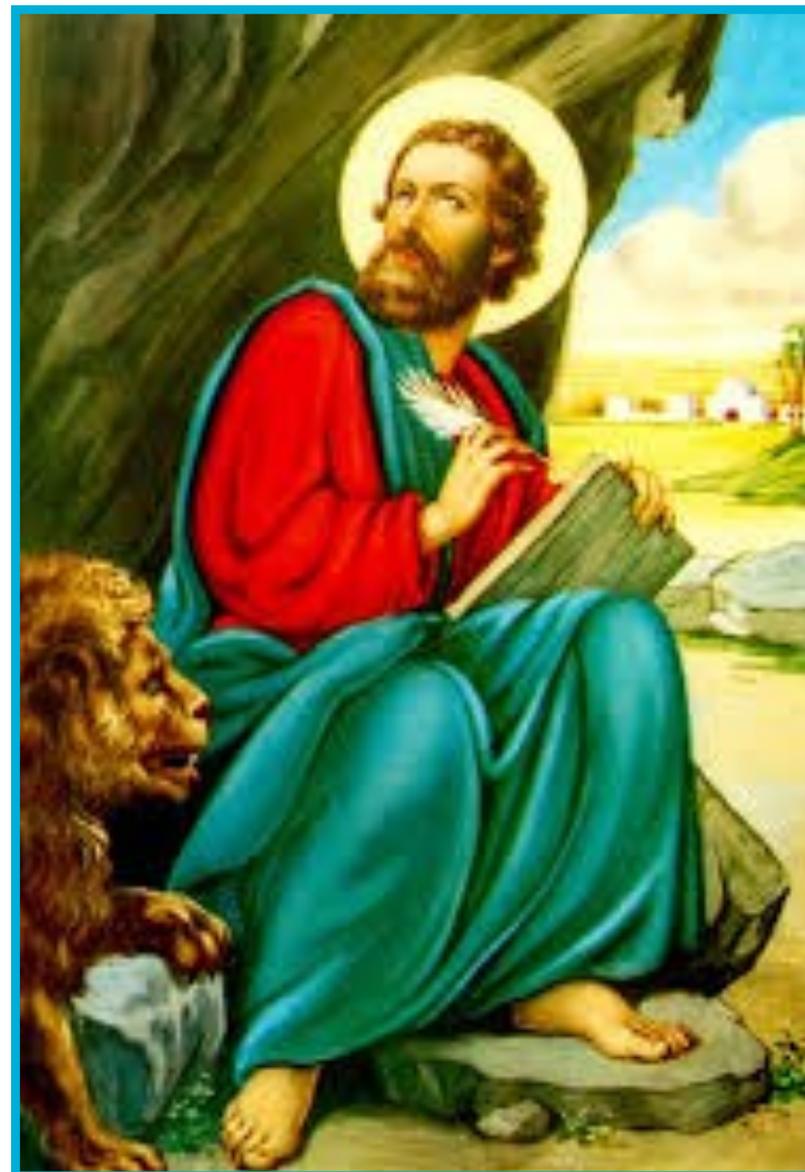


THE GOSPEL OF MARK

CHAPTER 16: 1-20



For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.*

Mark wrote down Peter's account of the 'good news'. Peter was one of the first twelve of Jesus' disciples, and the first to publicly recognize Him as the Messiah. Peter, through Mark, shows us that Jesus fulfills all the criteria of the Servant-Messiah our Ransom, who was prophesied by Isaiah some 750 years earlier (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:5-7; 52:13-53:12). Jesus is portrayed as a slave, caring for people and serving God (Mark 1:32-35). There are therefore no details of His birth, only of the beginning of His service (Mark 1:1,9).

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Mark 16: 1-20

Douay Rheims Version

Christ's resurrection and ascension.

1. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus.
2. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, *the sun being now risen (The sun being now risen: They set out before it was light, to go to the sepulchre; but the sun was risen when they arrived there. Or, figuratively, the sun here spoken of is the sun of justice, Christ Jesus our Lord, who was risen before their coming).*
3. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

follows, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, or is not baptized, shall be condemned,* For that baptism is necessary for salvation is plain from the words of Christ in S. John iii. 5, already cited.

Ver. 28. *They shall take up serpents.* From the places which they infested, and as Euthymius says, "They, shall destroy them, or even take them up in their hands without harm," as S. Paul did the viper. Therefore the Arabic translates, *They shall take up serpents in their hands.*

And if they shall drink any deadly thing. They shall drink poison unharmed, as the Apostles and many Saints have done.

They shall lay their hands upon the sick, &c. Observe that these signs were necessary in the Primitive Church for proving and strengthening the faith of Christ. Wherefore at that time almost all believers wrought miracles, at least of certain kinds; as, for example, the expulsion of devils from *energumens*. This is plain from Justin's *Dialogue against Trypho*, Tertullian (*Apolog.*), Lactantius, and others. Many also at that time received in baptism the gift of tongues. See Acts x. 47, &c.

Mystically: S. Bernard (*Serm. de Ascens.*) says, "The first work of faith which worketh by love is compunction of heart, by which, without doubt, devils are cast out when sins are rooted out of the heart. After that they who believe in Christ speak with new tongues when old things depart but of their mouth, and for the time to come they speak not with the old tongue of our first parents, who declined unto words of wickedness in making excuses for their sins. But when by compunction of the heart, and confession of the mouth, the former sins have been blotted out, in order that men may not backslide, and their latter end be worse than the beginning, it is needful that they take away serpents, that is, extinguish poisonous suggestions, &c. *If they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.* This is, when they feel the stings of concupiscence, they shall not consent. *They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.* This is, they shall cover their evil affections by good works, and by this medicine they shall be healed."

Ver. 19 *He was taken up into heaven.* By His divinity communicating to His body the qualities of lightness and fleetness.

"O kingdom of eternal blessedness, where youth never groweth old, where beauty never waneth, nor love groweth cold, where health knows no sickness, where joy never decreaseth, where life hath no end" (S. Augustine, *in Solil. c. 39*).

to them and others on a mountain of Galilee, as it is in S. Matt. xxviii. 16, &c. Or it may be that He committed this chief and peculiar office of preaching the Gospel to the Apostles more than once.

Go ye into the whole world, that is to say, not into Judæa only, as ye have done hitherto, but up and down in all directions throughout the world. For it does not seem probable that a few Apostles should have traversed and converted the whole world, especially because in America, lately discovered, no traces of the faith of Christ have been found.

Every creature, i.e., to all nations, as it is in Matt. xxviii. 19.

Ver. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.* This saying of Christ is abused to support their heresies, 1st, by the Lutherans, to prove that faith alone without good works is sufficient to salvation. But I reply that the meaning of Christ, as Euthymius, Theophylact, and others have observed, is, *he that believeth, &c., i.e.*, “he that, believing in Christ and receiving His baptism, has been washed from his sins, imbued with the grace of God, and sanctified, *he shall be saved,*” understand, “if he die in that state, retaining the grace of God even unto death.” But it is impossible for the baptized to continue in this state of grace if they do not those good works which the law of Christ commands. Also, in the name of *faith*, or *faith* and *baptism*, as the prime requisites, and which, at the beginning of the Church were chiefly to be inculcated upon the Gentiles, all other things consequent upon them must be understood, such as hope, charity, and good works, as I have shown at length in the introduction to S. Paul’s Epistles.

2nd The Anabaptists infer from this saying of Christ that little children must not be baptized, because they cannot believe. But I answer, Christ is here speaking of adults. For only adults are able to believe, and all the preceding words apply to adults only. That little children ought to be baptized is plain from the perpetual tradition and practice of the Church, and from the words in S. John iii. 5, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless any one be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

S. Augustine adds, and reiterates in various passages, that these words of Christ do refer to infants also in a measure, for as they sinned by the will of Adam, not their own, so likewise they believe by the faith of the Church, in their parents, or those who present them for baptism, not by their own.

3rd The Calvinists gather from these words of Christ that baptism is not necessary for salvation, but that faith only is sufficient, because of it alone, they say, Christ subjoins, *But he that believeth not shall be condemned.* I reply that under the word *believe*, i.e., *faith*, baptism must be understood, which is the sacrament of faith, as well as all the other things which spring from and follow faith, as I have just said. For Mark, studying brevity, left it to the reader to gather from what he had said immediately previous, that these must be understood, *or shall not be baptized.* For otherwise the antithesis would be imperfect. To complete it we must read as

4. *And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great.*

5. *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. was risen before their coming.*

6. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here, behold the place where they laid him.

7. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see him, as he told you.

8. But they going out, fled from the sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized them: and they said nothing to any man; for they were afraid.

9. But he rising early the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalen, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

10. She went and told them that had been with him, who were mourning and weeping.

11. And they hearing that he was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe.

12. And after that he appeared in another shape to two of them walking, as they were going into the country.

13. And they going told it to the rest: neither did they believe them.

14. At length he appeared to the eleven as they were at table: and he upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen him after he was risen again.

15. And he said to them: Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall cast out devils: they shall speak with new tongues.

18. 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.

19. And the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.

20. But they going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.

1 *An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women. 9 Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene: 12 to two going into the country: 14 then to the apostles, 15 whom he sendeth forth to preach the gospel: 19 and ascendeth into heaven.*

Ver. 1. *And when the Sabbath was past:* that is to say, at the beginning of the night before the Lord’s day. “After a sad week comes the radiance of a happy day,” says the Scholiast.

Mary of Jacob (Vulg.), i.e., Mary, the mother of James the Less and Jude, as the Arabic version gives it, and the wife of Cleopas.

And Salome: the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John.

That coming they might anoint Jesus. According to the custom of the Jews, says Theophylact; that the body might be preserved sweet. Spices are of a drying nature. They did not realise the dignity of Christ's Divinity, nor His resurrection. But they loved Him very tenderly, both as a man and a prophet, although now dead.

Ver. 6. *Who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here*. "The angel is not ashamed of the cross," says Theophylact, "for in it is the salvation of men." The *Interlinear* says, "The cross's bitter root is gone; the flower of life with its fruits, which lay in death, has arisen in glory."

Go, tell His disciples. "The women are bid," says the *Interlinear*, "to announce it to the apostles, because as by a woman (Eve) death was announced, by a woman it might be told that life had risen again."

And Peter. "That him whom a woman had made deny, a woman might make confess," says Druthmar. The Scholiast in S. Jerome adds that "Peter was named especially because he counted himself unworthy of being a disciple, because he had thrice denied his Master." And S. Gregory (*Hom. 21, in Evang.*) says, "If the angel had not named Peter, he would not have dared to come among the disciples. He is called, therefore, by name, that he might not despair."

Ver. 8. *For a trembling* (of body) *and fear* (of mind) had seized them. Theophylact says, "ἐκστασις, that is, stupor, at the sight of the angel had come on them." But this astonishment was mingled with intense joy. For they were astounded and were glad at the wonderful things which they heard, even that Jesus their beloved was risen from the dead.

For they were afraid. Not only because of the vision of angels, but also "on account of the Jews," says Euthymius, "lest they should appear to have themselves stolen away Jesus; lest they should kill them when they heard that they had proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus: as shortly afterwards the Jews placed Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus in a ship without oars or sail, and sent them to what would have been certain destruction had not God brought them in safety to Marseilles."

Ver. 9. *Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils*. Mark adds this to show the power of repentance and love. With these was Magdalene the sinner so inflamed, that she deserved first to see Christ risen again, that from her sinners might learn not to despair, but vehemently to love; for so they shall surpass the Holy Innocents in grace and glory. So Bede, "Because where sin abounded, grace hath superabounded." Bede adds, "A woman was the beginner of transgression. A woman first tasted death, but in Magdalene woman first saw the resurrection, that woman might not bear the perpetual guilt of transgression among men." See what is said on Luke viii. 2.

Ver. 12. *He appeared in another shape: Arabic, garment, i.e., of a traveller, as they were going into the country: Arabic, to the village; Gr. into the field, i.e., to a country-house at Emmaus*. For, as S. Austin says (*Consens. Evang.*), "under the name of *country* not only villages, but towns and boroughs outside the capital, which was the mother city of all, were wont to be called." These disciples, therefore, were going from Jerusalem into the country, that is, into the neighbouring small town of Emmaus. This place was made a famous city by the Romans, and called Nicopolis, as a monument of their victory in the capture of Jerusalem. This appearance of Christ is the same as that related by S. Luke (xxiv. 13), as is plain from the circumstances, which are the same in both cases. So commentators generally. Euthymius alone thinks they were different, because Mark adds that the Apostles did not believe them when they told them that Christ was risen, whilst Luke intimates the contrary, that they did believe. But the answer is easy, that some believed, but others did not believe.

Ver. 13. *Neither did they believe them*. This happened by the permission and providence of God. "For this their incredulity was not so much their weakness as it was to become our strength," says S. Gregory. "For the resurrection itself was made manifest to them by many proofs, when they doubted of it. And when we read and acknowledge these things, what else is it but to be confirmed by their doubting?"

Ver. 14. *At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table*. The Vulgate has *novissime, last of all*: Gr. ὑστερον. This was the last appearance of Christ on the day of the resurrection, for S. Mark only relates those appearances which took place on that day. You may say, But if so, He did not appear to the Eleven, but to the Apostles, for S. Thomas was absent. Wherefore Maldonatus thinks that this appearance was that which took place on the Sunday after the resurrection, when Thomas was present. But I say that they are here called *the Eleven*, although Thomas was absent, because the college of the Apostles after the treachery of Judas was reduced to eleven. That is why they are here called *the Eleven*, although Thomas was absent. Thus the Decemvirs were called by that name when gathered together, although one or two might be absent.

They did not believe. S. Jerome (*lib. 2, cant. Pelag.*) writes that in some Greek codices there is found added after these words as follows: "And they had content, saying, Substance is that world of iniquity which by means of evil spirits suffers not the true power of God to be apprehended: therefore now reveal Thy righteousness." But the Church has expunged all this, for it savours of the heresy of Manes and Montanus.

Ver. 15. *And He said unto them, Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*. He said this not on Easter day, when He appeared to the Eleven as they sat at meat, but afterwards, when He showed Himself