

Easter Sunday reading and reflection

Bible verses:

- The angel said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" (Luke chapter 24, verses 5-6, NIV).
- "Our hope is certain. It is something for the soul to hold on to. It is strong and secure" (Hebrews chapter 6, verse 19, NIRV).
- "You will show me the path that leads to life; your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever" (Psalm chapter 16, verse 11, GNT).

Reflection:

What do you do when you feel hopeless? Hide away? Seek temporary solace in an addictive substance or escapist entertainment? Do you fight to find a solution, or reach out to a trusted friend?

The Easter story shows us another way to respond to feelings of hopelessness. It's to find a path to hope by approaching Jesus.

When Jesus died, his body was placed in a tomb. On the Sunday afterwards, a group of women who had followed Jesus – Mary Magdalene, Mary and Joanna – walked a path to the tomb where they expected to find Jesus' body.

After watching him suffer and die, they were feeling grief-stricken and hopeless. They held a symbol of that hopelessness in their hands: the spices to anoint his dead body.

However, although they expected to find his body and simply anoint him with respect, their path of hopelessness turned into a path to hope.

Because at the tomb, they didn't find his body. They found an angel who shared the good news that Jesus had come back to life (see the Bible verse from Luke chapter 24, verses 5-6). Jesus rose from the dead, and through this act, he offered hope for the future to all people. It is a hope that is certain and one we can hold on to (see the Bible verse from Hebrews chapter 6, verse 19).

There is a profound lesson here. In a situation that felt hopeless, the women took the one action they could take. They approached Jesus.

Just as Jesus approached God the Father in prayer during his anguish (see the Good Friday reflection), the women physically approached Jesus during their anguish. And through approaching Jesus, they found hope, life and joy.

Jesus loves us and this gives meaning to our lives. As the Bible says in Psalm chapter 16, verse 11, he promises us joy, a sense of purpose for our days, and assures us of hope for eternity.

Questions to reflect on:

1. If you were one of Jesus' followers during his time on Earth, how would you react to the news of Jesus' death and then resurrection?

2. How does knowing that Jesus offers you hope and a purpose make you feel?

3. How can you walk a path to hope this Easter?

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you that Jesus rose back to life. Thank you that his life gives meaning and purpose to us, and that you offer us a hope we can hold on to. Please help us to seek strength in your hope and to experience the path that leads to life and joy. Amen.

We encourage you to explore what action steps you can take towards hope as identified in question three, and speak to God about them in prayer.