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*Do you remember where you were when you heard that President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated? Do you remember where you were when you heard that the Challenger space shuttle had exploded? Do you remember where you were when you heard a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center? Most of us, except for our younger members, can remember where they were during one of these events. These events had an effect on us, they shaped our lives in small and large ways. In each of these moments it seemed the world would never be the same. It is interesting to think though, what would such a moment have been for the Disciples and so many others living in Jerusalem during the time of the Gospels. But we can easily guess the answer. Perhaps they would have been asked by their descendants and by that first generation to live after the death and Resurrection of Jesus, *Do you remember where you were when you heard that Jesus had been arrested and condemned to death? Do you remember where you were when you heard that Jesus had been crucified? Do you remember where you were when you heard the veil in the temple had been rent from top to bottom?* And after that first Easter Sunday they might have been asked, *Do you remember where you were when you first heard that Jesus had risen from the dead?**

Of course, we know from the Gospels where the Disciples were when they first heard that Jesus had risen from the dead. And at this hour of the day, the Disciples are still in hiding, Mary Magdalene had gone to the tomb before the sunrise and met the risen Lord after having mistaken Him for the gardener. She ran back to the Disciples and told them she had seen Jesus. But the disciples don't readily trust her, after all she had also followed Jesus from Pilate to Calvary. With the emotional trauma that Mary Magdalene had endured, who could believe her? But Peter and John run to the tomb to see for themselves. They must have been afraid at first to even approach the tomb as they knew the soldiers would be on guard. And yet St. John would have us know that he outran St. Peter to the tomb that morning, but then must have lost the nerve to go into the tomb to see for himself. Or allowed Peter to enter first, because he, the *beloved disciple* already knew what had come to pass.

Likewise, the holy myrrh bearing women; St. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, come to the tomb while it was still early having brought enough spices and aloes to properly embalm Jesus. Yet in this encounter with the empty tomb the women do not see Jesus, but an angel, who tells them not to be afraid, that Jesus has risen. After this encounter with the angel, they fled

from the tomb, and were so overcome that they trembled and were afraid to tell anyone what they had saw.

We find in the Gospels that the empty tomb on that first Easter Sunday was so startling and unexpected to the disciples that it took several days for them to fully realize that Jesus had risen from the dead. This also puts into perspective how crushing the events of Good Friday were, how shattered and broken they were by the Crucifixion, by abandoning their Lord and Master when He needed them most, and by hearing that His tortured body had been placed in a borrowed tomb. The Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Mary Magdalene, and all of the Disciples were so afraid by Jesus' Crucifixion and death that they had felt it necessary to hide themselves behind locked doors. The news of the empty tomb is difficult for them to swallow. St. Mary Magdalene at first believes someone has come and stolen His body. St. Peter and St. John must see the empty tomb for themselves. St. Thomas will not believe until He sees the nail prints for himself.

The Resurrected Lord spends the next forty days appearing and teaching His disciples to help them overcome their doubts and fears. And as the truth dawns upon them, that Jesus has truly risen from the dead, that He has conquered sin, death and the grave by death, they are transformed from mere mediocre disciples to the very images of Christ. They are strengthened by Christ, endued with the Evangelizing power of the Holy Spirit, and only then do they become the great Apostles of the Church. St. Mary Magdalene and the Disciples may have grasped the truths of Easter Sunday gradually, but once they believed, it is the Truth that would not let them go. It is the Truth that they measured their lives by.

If we were able to ask any one of the disciples what day had forever changed their lives, they would tell us that day was Easter Sunday. The Christian should say the same. The day our lives changed forever is the day we first heard the Easter story, the day it was applied to our souls through the waters of Baptism, the day we first tasted of its fruits: the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. So let this day be the Truth that changed our lives forever, not tragedies and wrongdoing, but the day that sin, death, and the grave were overthrown forever.