

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Underdeveloped Believers**      Saturday within the Octave of Easter      April 22, 2017  
8:15 AM    Acts 4:13-21;    **Mk 16:9-15**    (People are catechized and baptized and believe to a degree, but they really don't believe in the fullest possible way.)

Now there is such a thing in biblical studies called **textual criticism, which is the detailed study of ancient manuscripts**. According to these scholars this part of Mark is not found in many of the earliest manuscripts; rather **Mark's Gospel ends with the empty tomb. This therefore is an addition from some source.**

Now if you look at it, **it copies the other gospels**. It's John who says that Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene. It's Luke who says that Jesus appeared to two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Here it doesn't say Emmaus, but it says "on their way to the country." But what is quite interesting here is these disciples in Mark's version now don't believe Mary Magdalene, whereas in John you don't read that. In Luke when the disciples return from Emmaus, they are greeted with great joy; they are embraced and believed, but not here. **So what does that reflect?**

It probably reflects a fact **in the early Church that some disciples balked at the stories of Jesus appearing from the dead**. Now you will remember in John's Gospel there was one apostle not present when Jesus returned: Thomas. Thomas was the doubter. Well, according to this version, there is more than one doubter. **There are quite a few apparently who just didn't want to believe in this good news.**

And I think that is still part of the problem in the Church. **People are catechized and baptized and believe to a degree, but they really don't believe in the fullest possible way** in the goodness of the good news, in the power of the good news, that Jesus really has been raised from the dead, that death has been conquered, that it is now within our power through the power of the Holy Spirit to build a new world that is really very different from what we know. **This is the true power of the gospel, and it still remains undeveloped and unexercised in the lives of many.**