

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Meet the Risen Lord Yourself St. Mark, Evangelist Wednesday, April 25, 2018 8:15 AM 1 Pt 5:5b-14; **Mk 16:15-20** (Mark chose not to include the basic proclamation of the resurrection.)

Now there is great irony in today's liturgy, which is this feast of St. Mark, and the irony is that this reading I just read to you is not in the Gospel of Mark in the most ancient forms of it; it was added later. **Mark's Gospel in these most ancient forms ends with the women at the tomb, and he wrote, "and they were very much afraid," and that's the end.**

Now you have to understand before there were any written gospels, there was the oral preaching of the Church, **the oral preaching** of Christ risen from the dead. This was the **foundational message, the resurrection of Christ from the dead.** So everyone knew that; all Christians knew this; **without that, there would have been no Church.** Mark is the first one who actually sat down and wrote a gospel, but he chose, I believe, **he chose not to include the basic proclamation of the resurrection.** Some believe he did include it, but it was lost. I don't know if he did or didn't; no one knows. It is clear that Matthew and Luke and John have resurrection narratives, which they got from the oral proclamation, which is where the Church came from, but **why would Mark leave it out?**

I think because he was a genius, and I don't think later people appreciated what he was doing. Mark knew very well that without the resurrection, there would be no Church; there would be no assembly; there would be no anything, because **if it weren't for the resurrection of Christ, no one would have followed him.** So by leaving it out, he has actually accentuated it. **By coming to the empty tomb and saying nothing more, he is asking the readers to say, Well now what happened?** And after all, if you look at **Matthew and Luke and John, yes, they are very nice stories,** but they lack the power that the original experience must have had. **You have to meditate long on them to get any kind of strength or energy.** So Mark's idea, I believe, was I'm not going to say anything. **I'm going to take them to the empty tomb and let the believer discover the risen Christ for herself or himself.** Later of course people couldn't appreciate this, and they read it and they said, "Oh, my goodness, what's wrong with this guy? All the other evangelists give us nice stories about the resurrection; he doesn't give us one—let's add something." Well of course they could add it because that was already the oral tradition, and so they did! But think about **Mark's original intent: let the reader meet the risen Lord for himself or herself.**