



Scripture nugget – Who will roll over the boulder for us?

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint Him. Very early when the sun had risen, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb. They were saying to one another, “Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” (Mark 16:1-3).

The women at the Crucifixion. A number of women accompanied Jesus and His disciples from Galilee, ministering to them. Among those who were outstanding in their faith in Christ were the ones who were present at the Crucifixion and who did not run away to hide like the Apostles (with the exception of St John). They were not privileged like Apostles Peter, James and John who were witnesses of Christ’s transfiguration on Mount Tabor when His divinity was manifested. Nonetheless, their faith in Christ remained strong, and the terrible and shameful death of Christ on the Cross of crucifixion did not become a scandal to them as it did for so many others. Instead, they were not afraid to stand by Jesus, even when He was dying, and condemned and renounced by everyone around even their religious leaders. They were the unsung heroines of that day when the Son of the Most High God broke forever the bondage of sin over all sinners through His death on the cross of Calvary.

Who will roll over the boulder for us (cf. Mark 16:3)? These same women, very early on the day after the Sabbath, brought spices to anoint the corpse of Christ. They knew the tomb of Christ was made very secure at the request of the chief priests and Pharisees who were afraid Christ’s disciples would secretly steal His corpse and claim His resurrection (cf. Matthew 27:62-66). Thus, Pilate had the tomb secured by a guard which comprised a unit of several highly disciplined men. A huge boulder had been rolled across the opening to the tomb, and upon the boulder was affixed the Roman seal which if broken carried severe punishment of death. The women, however, were not deterred by all these security measures. They did what was to them the right thing. They were driven by their faith in and love of Christ. They did not know what to expect, wondering who would roll over the boulder for them. Their faith was reminiscent of that of Daniel and his friends, who said to pagan King Nebuchadnezzar: *“If our God, whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and from your hands, O king, may He save us! But even if He will not, you should know, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship the golden statue which you set up.”*(Daniel 3:17-18). Like Daniel and his friends, the faith and trust of these courageous women were not conditional even in the face of adversity and danger.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, You give great peace and courage to those who believe and trust You deeply. The women present at the Crucifixion and who brought spices to anoint Your Corpse were really exemplary in their faith in You in the face of adversity. You rewarded them greatly by choosing them to be the first witnesses of Your Resurrection, a most important event without which our faith would be useless and we would still be mired in our sins. They were the first to witness Your empty tomb, the evidence of Your resurrection. What they have done for You is recorded for all eternity. Give me a faith and courage as strong as theirs! Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for us. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.