

## MARK 16:9-20 REASSURANCE FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

<sup>9</sup> When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. <sup>10</sup> She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup> When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. <sup>12</sup> Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. <sup>13</sup> These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

<sup>14</sup> Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

<sup>19</sup> After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Although a rather obvious attempt to synchronize Mark's Gospel with the other three Gospels and Acts, the Church determined that this addendum was consistent with God's purpose and worth attaching for the encouragement of the community. It serves to remind us that the Gospel is an on-going story and not just a historical memorial. It provides multiple eye-witness evidence of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. It provides solace to those whose faith has wavered and courage to those who experienced fear. It reiterates that the Church's God-given purpose is to take the blessing it has received and share it with the world. It promises that God's work done according to God's will is bound to have God's provision. It articulates the hope that is available to humankind by the bodily ascension of Jesus, through which our humanity is taken into the presence of God.

We are given the assurance of the hope that we are forgiven and restored in our relationship with God. This assurance is not for us only, but for all who believe in Jesus. Thanks be to God!

**O Lord Christ, thank you for the faithful ones who have gone before me and witnessed to your saving grace, often at the cost of their own lives. As they died with the assurance of the hope that is promised through you, may I live my life with that assurance. May the hope of restoration with the Father and gratitude for all you have done to make it possible inform every aspect of my life today and for ever more. Amen.**