

Session 10

He is Going Ahead of You

A reflection on Mark 16:1-8

By Dr. Clark Hendley

As we come to the end of Mark's gospel, we meet the women arriving at the tomb to prepare Jesus' body, worrying about how they will roll away the stone at the entrance. To their surprise they find the tomb already opened and encounter an angel—a messenger from God—who tells them the good news: Jesus has overcome death, just as he said he would.

The angel has one word of instruction for the stunned women: "Go!" Go, he says, go and tell the disciples that Jesus has risen. And the women rush off to share their discovery with others. The Gospel of Mark thus ends similarly to the Gospel of Matthew in the use of the word "go." Matthew concludes his gospel with the words of the great commission from Jesus; and what does Jesus tell his disciples? To go! Go into all the world and tell the good news (28:19).

The same commission was given by our new Presiding Bishop in his homily at the closing Eucharist at the Episcopal Youth Event at the recent General Convention—"go!" "Go," he says, is one of God's favorite words. If you don't remember anything else I say, Bishop Curry admonishes the attendees, remember I said, "go!"

The good news of Mark's gospel, however, is not just the urging of the angel to the women to go. Rather, the good news is this: "he is going ahead of you." The angel tells the women that Jesus is going ahead of them, and this is the good news for us today as well. Jesus is not asking us to go where he has not already gone. He does not ask us to go off into uncharted territory. He tells us to **go**, but we have the assurance that he has gone before us. And this is, indeed, the good news.

- Dr. Clark Hendley is a member of St. John's Episcopal Church in New Braunfels, Texas.