



. . . and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. (Exodus 34:4)

Morning is my favorite time of day. It heralds new beginnings in every undertaking. For the Christian, there are many new beginnings. The morning of his walk with Christ began at the moment of his salvation. The number eight in Holy Scripture often symbolizes a new beginning and a new morning for mankind. God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The next day (eighth) became the first day of a new week. Eight souls were saved in the flood which signified the beginning of the new world after the old had been destroyed by the Deluge. The Book of Ruth is the eighth book of the Old Testament. It is a garden of grace in the midst of a time of judgment and famine. It typifies in Ruth and Boaz the union existing between Christ and His Church – a new beginning for all of faith. The musical scale is comprised of seven notes – the eighth begins a new scale.

Morning brings to a close a long night of darkness and the brilliance of a beautiful and multi-colored sunrise. Light comes in the morning, and the contrast between that light and the previous hours of darkness stand in stark contrast, enhancing our appreciation of the light. It is a time of rejoicing. The rising of the morning sun gilds the sky with remarkable beauty and art.

Morning is also a time at which man and beasts begin their daily labors. Our Lord proclaimed: *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.* (John 9:4) His reference was to far more than a physical day, I believe. It must also have referred to His coming betrayal, death, and burial.

Our most important duty as Christians is to seek the Lord at first dawning of the day, even while it is yet dark, as did Mary Magdalene. *1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. 2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.* (John 20:1-2) If we do not seek the Lord, we shall not find Him. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened*

unto you. (Matt 7:7) Our desperate need to find Him vanquishes all fear and reluctance. Mary came early in the morning “when it was yet dark.” She came seeking a dead body of her beloved Lord. When that dead body could not be found, she wept blinding and bitter tears. Those tears blinded her to the Gardener who came behind. This mysterious Figure spoke to her, *Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?* (John 20:15) Looking at the presumed gardener (for He was truly THE Gardener of Souls), her tear-filled eyes could only comprehend the vague outline of a man. But when Jesus called her name, as He had also called forth Lazarus, her eyes were opened to the identity of this Figure in the Garden: *She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.* (John 20:16)

When we come to the Lord at first light, and seek Him with tears of repentance, He shall reveal Himself to our eyes that were previously blinded by care and worries.

There is coming a morning to excel all other mornings for the Christian. It is the morning of resurrection when the soul of the saint is united with its Father and its God. Where does the soul go at death? *man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* (Eccl 12:5-7)

Please consider the contrast in the fate of two men mentioned in the Gospel of Saint Luke by our Lord Jesus Christ: *19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.* (Luke 16:19-23)

Question 1: What happened to the beggar, Lazarus, at the moment of death?

Question 2: Where did Lazarus wake up?

Question 3: What happened to the rich man when HE died?

Question 4: Where was the rich man when he awoke immediately after death?

Of course, you know the answers to these questions even if you have given little thought to them. Let us examine them briefly: Lazarus, as is the case of all saints who fall asleep in Christ, was given a most auspicious escort to the Bosom of Abraham (Paradise). Lazarus awoke in his Father’s care but in such a beautiful and perfect place that he could not see the rich man suffering across the great abyss in Hell.

The rich man had his name written in the earth, and so, he was buried. That is the only honor afforded him. The body of Lazarus was aptly buried, too, but not his soul! Both body and soul of the rich man were BURIED forever away from God in a dark and distant land (Hell). The rich man, in fact, woke up in Hell. The punishment of the wicked is instantaneous and never ceasing. But unlike Lazarus in being unable to see a soul in Hell, the rich man could see that old beggar, Lazarus, whom he accounted good-for-nothing in his life, resting soundly in the Bosom of Abraham. It is a dreadful ordeal to awaken in the fires of Hell.

Now, the rich man pleads with Abraham that he send Lazarus to him to alleviate his thirst; but there is no intercourse between Heaven and Hell. When we arrive at either destination – we have ARRIVED, period! So the rich man pleads that Lazarus return to earth and witness to his five brothers so that they will be able to avoid the same punishment as himself. *27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also*

come into this place of torment. Please remember how many prophets pleaded with the nation of Israel in time past only to be beaten, vanquished, and even murdered. None would listen. Remember, too, the years of our Lord's ministry when He preached Truth to all who would hear but, yet, was rejected. Even after He arose from the Tomb, many still rejected Him. The big preachers of the day did not desire to lose their lucrative livings to a mere Messiah and Son of the Living God! *29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* (Luke 16:27-31) (And our Lord truly arose from the dead!)

The coming Resurrection Morning of the Child of God comes immediately at the closing of the eyes in that sleep to end all sleep. Our eyes will immediately open in the Fair Havens of Heaven. Have you heard of that great mystery referred to by the Apostle Paul? *51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor 15:51-57) The soul shall, at the point of God's own timing, be reunited with a glorified body that is no longer subject to pain or sorrow. Its only resource is JOY!

These are examples of quiet and peaceful morning sunrises, of deep and loving thoughts of the Savior who joins you in the "Garden alone while the dew is still on the roses." We are always alone when we hear the voice of the Lord – even if we are standing in a crowded thoroughfare. Our souls are refreshed by the morning dews and damps of His Holy Spirit to teach us all things written of Him in His Holy Word. *19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.* (2 Peter 1:19-21) As did David, the King, we must seek Him early while He yet may be found: *O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* (Psalm 63:1-2) That sanctuary is the sanctuary of our hearts, the Temple of the Living God.