

## WINGS (Women in God's Spirit) – Presentation Script (Final)

### *“The Resurrection Appearance of the Lord.”*

#### NARRATIVE PRESENTATION:

\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY A COPY OF WINGS INTRO (SLIDE # 1) \*\*\*\*\*

(INITIAL SETUP: BEFORE PRESENTATION BEGINS)

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#### INTRODUCTION

\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY A COPY OF THE OUTLINE (SLIDE # 2) \*\*\*\*\*

Here's an outline of our discussion

Eileen Brown helped me considerably in setting the table for the subject; the authors to whom she introduced me are: Raymond Apicella, a professor of religious studies at St Thomas University in Miami, helped in forming a framework for comparative gospel versions. Wolfgang Trilling is a Catholic priest who writes theological works principally in German (needless to say, I didn't read him in the original). The Reverend Dan Harrington is a Jesuit teaching at Boston College and John Pilch is on the faculty at Georgetown University. Considerable plaudits to Eileen for her invaluable assistance in getting me started on the research for this discussion.

We look very briefly at the larger historical framework within which the Gospels were written. We then examine Matthew's Gospel with a view towards understanding the singular message that sets Matthew apart from the other Gospel writers. We then study the gospels with a format that has us comparing and contrasting Matthew's Gospel with the canonical gospels of Mark, Luke, and John. We focus on certain of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. We briefly look at some of the roles that women played in the scriptures and, finally, we discuss the manner in which the Evangelists in their proclamation of the Gospel message accorded women particular prominence.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY SYNOPTIC GOSPEL DIAGRAM (SLIDE # 3) \*\*\*\*\***

Since we will explore some of the differences and similarities between Matthew and the other Evangelists, we might find it useful to have an awareness of the theological controversy surrounding the origin and changes that the gospels have undergone over the millennia.

The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic gospels from the Greek words "*syn*" and "*optic*" loosely translated as "*seeing together*". A careful comparison of the four Gospels reveals that Matthew, Mark and Luke are noticeably similar, while John is quite different. The first three Gospels agree

extensively in language, in the material they include, and in the order in which events and sayings from the life of Christ are recorded. Chronological order does not appear to have been rigidly followed in any of the Gospels, however. As in all of the Gospels, these differences between and among the Synoptic gospel writers and John are fully evident in the accounts of the Resurrection as we will see.

A mathematical comparison shows that 91 percent of Mark's gospel is contained in Matthew, while 53 percent of Mark is found in Luke. Such agreement raises questions as to the origin of the Synoptic Gospels. Did the authors rely on a common source based upon an oral tradition? Were they interdependent? Did an earlier gospel exist from which the Synoptic gospel writers drew? Did the Synoptic writers draw from one another? Questions such as these present us with what is called the Synoptic Problem.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY AUGUSTINIAN HYPOTHESIS DIAGRAM (SLIDE # 4)\*\*\*\*\***

One prominent school of thought among some respected theologians and biblical scholars is that Matthew's Gospels formed the root from which the other evangelists drew their accounts of the New Testament. This more traditional view was advanced by one of the earliest and most notable proponents, our own

St Augustine of Hippo, in what is sometimes referred to as the Augustinian hypothesis or the Matthean priority.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY MARKAN PRIORITY DIAGRAM (SLIDE # 5)\*\*\*\*\***

A more widely accepted theory among contemporary scholars is referred to as the Markan Priority. Mark's gospel is by far the shortest, just over half the length of Luke, and omits much found in Matthew and Luke. Conversely, most of Mark is found in Matthew and Luke. Mark's gospel was initially much shorter than it is today...much has been added over two millennia.

There is complete consistency and obvious unanimity among the Synoptic Gospel writers, as well as John, that women were a prominent presence in the events of the last three days of Jesus' life that is the Crucifixion, Entombment, and Resurrection. The involvement of these women, whose stories were so inextricably linked to the life of Jesus was central to the gospel accounts of that period.

I have used the Douay-Rheims version of the bible, with some variants, as the basis for this presentation; the gospels you will see and read here were all taken from that bible. Notwithstanding that there are many more versions that have

been introduced by the Church over the past several decades and that have replaced Douay-Rheims.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY OF ARCHBISHOP SHEEN QUOTE (SLIDE # 6) \*\*\*\*\***

In the words of the immortal Archbishop Sheen of New York.....

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY MATTHEW'S GOSPEL /MESSAGE FEATURES (SLIDE # 7) \*\*\*\*\***

***(PASS OUT COPIES OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL TO THE GROUP)***

Let's now examine Matthew in more depth.

The singular message of Matthew that gives his Gospel a focus unlike the other writers is the theme of Fulfillment...that is the Fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, the Isaian promise. Matthew is writing for, and to, the Jews,....their hopes and dreams that a Messiah would come. His gospel is the most Jewish of the four gospels. Jesus was born, suffered, died, was buried and then rose from the dead in fulfillment of the scripture.....of those prophecies. Matthew's message is that a new covenant is created and the old covenant, represented by an age in which the Temple was central to the Faith of the Jews, passes away, having been fulfilled. This use of the term "covenant" as used here refers to the Old and New Testaments. The new age arrives with the glorious Resurrection of Jesus, the Son

of Man. The Law of this new people in this new age is to be the law that fulfills the Law of Moses. The Hope of God's people is revived by His Resurrection as He, Himself, foretold. This explains, to some degree, the apocalyptic setting for Matthew's Gospel story.....the earthquake, the appearance of the angel, the terror experienced by the guards, the angel's message that "Jesus is not found among the dead....he has risen.....he has truly risen..... he lives!

Let's first to listen to a reading of Matthew's gospel and to listen closely to the details of the narrative. A bit later, you'll see and read the resurrection gospel versions of the other three Evangelists, those of Mark, Luke, and John, as we discuss the similarities and differences between and among them. Our primary focus, however, is on Matthew.

***(I'LL READ ALOUD THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW)***

**\*\*\*\*\*PLACEHOLDER SLIDE CALLING/INSPIRATION (SLIDE # 8)\*\*\*\*\***

Matthew's apocalyptic imagery, the appearance of the angel, and the earthquake occurrence all recall several Old and New Testament events described in the Book of Revelation, in Daniel, in Judges, and in Matthew's death of Jesus.

- Revelation 1:14-16 – speaking of the appearance of the Lord...“....*His head and his hair were white with the whiteness of wool, like snow, his eyes like a burning flame, his feet like burnished bronze when it has been refined in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of the ocean. In his right hand he was holding seven stars, out of his mouth came a sharp sword, double-edged, and his face was like the sun shining with all its force....*”
- Matthew 27:52-53 “....*the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many....*”

The appearance of the angel is brilliant and majestic as was Jesus when he was transfigured on the mountain. Angels are ubiquitous in scripture settings. Angels brought tidings to Joseph when the Messiah was a child. Angels came to be at his side and minister to Him following the temptations by Satan in the desert and they are present at his glorious liberation from the sepulcher. Angels will accompany the Son of Man when he comes as judge. A centurion, an earthly being had proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God; the angel now fully validates that fact.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY TERRORIZED SEPULCHRE GUARDS (SLIDE # 9) \*\*\*\*\***

Matthew, unlike the other gospel writers, discusses the reaction of the guards to the earthquake and the appearance of the angel. They were terrorized by the events of that morning. Matthew describes them as being struck with terror at the appearance of the angel and that they “became as dead men”. Matthew’s mention of the guards and the other marginal players, the chief priests and elders, became central to the efforts of the Jewish leadership to discredit the resurrection events of that morning and to destroy any possibility that Jesus would develop a following among the Jews. The crafting of a story by the chief priests to “explain” the disappearance of Jesus’ body from the sepulcher was clearly intended to discredit Jesus’ disciples and supplant their narrative with that which would erase, for all time, the fact of His Resurrection.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY THE ANGEL DELIVERING MESSAGE (SLIDE # 10)\*\*\*\*\***

The message of the angel sought to both allay the fears of the women witnessing the event and to reassure them that Jesus had arisen and lived. The message - “there is no need to fear – death has been overcome.” The sepulcher had become transformed; it had ceased now to be a place of mourning for the dead and had become a place of life, joy, and exultant praise.



**\*\*\*DISPLAY JESUS INSTRUCTING THEM TO MEET IN GALILEE (SLIDE # 11) \*\*\***

Jesus foretold all of this in Matthew 26:32... “after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Again.....the fulfillment of the prophecy. Jesus returns to Galilee, where he had begun his ministry and called his disciples. He is no longer in the place of death, the tomb or Jerusalem, but in Galilee, the place of life.

Matthew leaves no doubt that the resurrection of Jesus is the seminal event of the age and that the seeds of Christianity are sown for all ages to come. The power of Matthew’s gospel, and those of the other Evangelists, is the strongest testament to the power of Hope and our Catholic Faith that might be imagined.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY A COPY OF MARK’S GOSPEL (SLIDE #12)\*\*\*\*\*  
(HAVE THEM READ IT)**

Mark’s Gospel has undergone many changes and embellishments over the centuries. As his Gospel, set in the context of the Markan Priority, is sometimes, as we’ve seen, mentioned by theologians as a source for the Gospel of Matthew, let’s first read it as we prepare to examine Mathew’s Gospel in a comparative and contrasting context as we look at it side-by-side with the Gospels of the other Evangelists.

Since Mark's gospel was the shortest and least developed of the gospels, there has been much speculation on how this came about. Did Mark intentionally end his Gospel at Book 16, Verse 8 and someone else, later in the transmission-process, compose the "longer ending" as a conclusion to what was interpreted to be too-abrupt an account?

Did Mark not intend to end at 16:8, but was somehow prevented from finishing ...perhaps by his own death or sudden departure from Rome, whereupon someone else finished the work by attaching material from a short Marcan composition about Jesus' post-resurrection appearances?

Did Mark write an ending which was accidentally lost and someone, during the first century compose the "longer ending" as a sort of patch, relying on parallel-passages from the other canonical Gospels?

Or perhaps Mark wrote an ending but it was suppressed and replaced with the current verses 9–20, which are a pastiche of parallel passages from the other canonical Gospels.

Mark may even have written verses beyond the first eight and they were lost accidentally. All of this adds to the Synoptic theory problem.

**\*\*\*THE WOMEN BRINGING SPICES TO ANNOINT JESUS' BODY (SLIDE # 13)\*\*\***

In this respect, there is “agreement” between Mark and Luke, as we will see, regarding the purpose for the visit of the women on that Sabbath morning. The Salome mentioned here is not the “Salome” of Herod’s court and John the Baptist fame. She is believed to be Mary of Clopas and to have been the mother of Zebedee's sons James and John and a half-sister or sister-in-law of Mary the mother of Jesus.

**\*\*\*YOUNG MAN (MESSENGER) IN THE SEPULCHRE (SLIDE # 14)\*\*\***

One of the particularly interesting things about Mark’s gospel...at least the first eight verses which we are quite confident were written by Mark, is his reference to the women, upon leaving the tomb.....they were reduced to silence and “said nothing to any man: for they were afraid”. Each of the other three gospel writers had the women, in one fashion or another, proclaiming Jesus’ resurrection which would seem to be critical to the continuity of the resurrection story as events unfolded beyond the sepulcher.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISPLAY A COPY OF LUKE’S GOSPEL (SLIDE # 15)\*\*\*\*\*  
(HAVE THEM READ IT)**

Resurrection is a key theme throughout Luke's gospel writings. Luke subtly inserts the verb "to rise" in many instances where the reader would not expect it. When Jesus heals the paralytic, he rises. Likewise Jairus' daughter rises, Peter rises, the disciples on the road to Emmaus rise, Paul rises and indeed Jesus himself rises from the dead. Luke conveys the power of Jesus' resurrection by showing how the Christian not only is "buried therefore with him by baptism into death" but also is "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father" so that he too "might walk in newness of life". The Christian life is not only about taking up one's cross, but about living in the power and victory of the resurrection.

The Acts of the Apostles, often referred to simply as Acts, is the fifth book of the New Testament; Acts outlines the history of the Apostolic Age. It is almost universally agreed that the author of Acts also wrote the Gospel of Luke. The author is traditionally identified as Luke the Evangelist.

**\*\*\*\*TWO MEN (MESSENGERS) IN THE SEPULCHRE (SLIDE # 16) \*\*\*\***

Luke, unlike Matthew and Mark, speaks of two men, two messengers, in the tomb sometimes interpreted as a reference to Jesus' charge in Luke's gospel of 10:1 in which Jesus stated his charge to his disciples, seventy-two in number, to

go ".....ahead of him in pairs, two by two, to every town and place He intended to visit".

**\*\*\*\*TAKING THE RESURRECTION MESSAGE TO THE DISCIPLES (SLIDE # 17) \*\*\*\***

Also here in Luke, we see another distinguishing aspect of his gospel where he makes reference to the women only in the last line where he speaks of Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary of James, an apparent reference to the "other Mary" of Matthew or Marks reference to her as the Mother of James. Joanna was the wife of Chuza, the steward who managed the household of Herod Antipas; she is also one of the apostles mentioned in Acts 1:2-3 that Jesus chose. As seen in this portrayal of the sepulcher scene, Luke mentions the "other women who were with them". All were apparently bearers of the resurrection message to the apostles. The "eleven" mentioned here is an obvious reference to the absence of Judas.

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**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY A COPY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL (SLIDE #18) \*\*\*\*\***  
**(HAVE THEM READ IT)**

The gospel of John is dramatically different than the synoptic gospels. John's emphasis in all his writings is on the Divinity of Jesus as the Christ. This is the Johannine Jesus. John refers only to Mary Magdalen as a visitor to the tomb that morning. He does not comment specifically on the purpose of the visit. Indeed, in John's version, Mary Magdalen did not even enter the tomb but, upon seeing the stone "taken away", left to find Peter and John himself. John's gospel has no messenger; in his gospel, there is only the mute message of the empty tomb.

**\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#19) THE WOMEN'S CONCERN OF THE MISSING JESUS \*\*\***

Early on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she ran to Simon Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" (John, himself) exclaiming that Jesus' body had been removed from the tomb. She said "'we' don't know where they have put him!" The "we" that she refers to here is unclear; could the other women, whom John does not mention (those spoken of by the Synoptic writers) be accompanying her? Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but John outran Peter and reached the tomb first. John bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not yet enter the tomb. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around

Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally John also went inside. He saw and believed. They appeared not to understand from Scripture that Jesus was to rise from the dead. The disciples returned to where they were staying.

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#20) DEPICTING THE COMPARATIVE FEATURES \*\*\*\*\***

Here we see a depiction of the similarities and differences among the Gospels; let's briefly review some of the salient features of the resurrection gospels.

All four Gospel writers agree broadly upon the time of day.....dawn or early morning of the "first day"; John states that it was still dark.

Apicella writes that "It is no accident that all four gospel writers place the time of the event at dawn of the first day of the week. Those attuned to biblical detail will realize that the beginning of the resurrection event corresponds with the beginning of creation itself (Genesis 1). Just as God began the world with light, it is at first light that the new world created by the passion, death, and resurrection of the Son of God is being created – this is the beginning of the Christian era...the new Covenant, as we have said.

Matthew speaks of two women who visit the sepulcher; they are Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary”. The “other Mary” is thought, by some, to be Mary of Clopas. Unlike Mark’s telling, this is not a tale of weary women looking for their Lord. Matthew is thought by some to be referring to the visit of the women to the sepulcher as consistent with the Jewish tradition of observing the tomb for a period of three days after the interment to ensure that the interred is, in fact, dead. Again, we see Matthew’s adherence to Jewish custom and practice. Mark writes of three women; he describes them as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, a follower of Jesus as we have seen. Matthew’s Mary of Clopas is thought by some biblical scholars to be Mary, the mother of James, in effect creating agreement between Matthew and Mark on this small detail of scripture.

In looking at the purpose for the visit to the tomb, we read that Matthew states only that the women went to “see the sepulcher”. Mark, on the other hand, as did Luke, relates that the women brought spices with which to anoint Jesus.

Only Matthew, whose account of the entire event is substantially more detailed than the others, describes the atmosphere surrounding the sepulcher in apocalyptic terms. He speaks of a “great earthquake”, an angel of the Lord



descending from heaven and rolling back the stone, sitting upon it, and possessing a countenance as lightning and raiment like snow. Mark writes nothing of this; again, as we've seen, his early gospel is incomplete.

This same message of catastrophic dimensions is seen in Matthew's description of the events that accompanied the aftermath of the Crucifixion:

*“And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose. And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him”*

The response of those women who visited the sepulcher during those early hours of the first day ranged from fear to astonishment and ambivalence. Their reaction is described in broadly similar terms by each of the Gospel writers.

Perhaps the greatest insights into the message of the collective Gospel(s) are related to the message itself as the accounts of the three Synoptic gospels give us.

In Matthew's gospel the angel cited Jesus' earlier promise in his gospel passage 26:32 that ".....after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." Mark's and Luke's gospels both contain similar passages regarding what Jesus had foretold about his meeting with his disciples in Galilee following His Rise.

It is instructive to understand that Matthew saw Jerusalem as representing death but that Galilee was a symbol of life. Galilee was where Jesus had begun his ministry and called his disciples. Galilee was also the base from which the Word of God was to be carried to all nations...to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

There was understandable unanimity regarding to whom the word of Jesus' Resurrection was to be carried. Matthew recounts the angel's direction to carry the word to His disciples. Mark's young man directs that the disciples and Peter were to be told...but the women "were afraid and told no one." Luke.... "the eleven" and "all the rest". In John's account, Mary Magdalen tells only Simon Peter and John.

**\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE #21 DEPICTING THE POST-RESURRECTION APPEARANCES \*\*\*\***

After they found the empty tomb, the Gospels indicate that Jesus made a series of appearances to the disciples. He was not immediately recognizable, according to Luke. One scholar concludes that although he could appear and disappear, he was not a ghost. Writing that Luke was very insistent about that, he points out that "the risen Lord could be touched, and he could eat".

These events listed here are among those best known in scripture. We will look at a few of them.

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#22) NOLI ME TANGERE \*\*\*\* \* \* \***

Now Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" or "teacher". Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with

the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

This theme is ubiquitous in biblical art and literature...noli me tangere means literally "do not touch me". "Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

On yet another occasion, on the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

While they were still speaking about this,<sup>r</sup> he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." But they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that

it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they were still incredulous for joy and were amazed, he asked them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of baked fish;<sup>v</sup> he took it and ate it in front of them. He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And [behold] I am sending the promise of my Father<sup>\*</sup> upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#23) THE APOSTLE THOMAS \*\*\*\* \* \* \***

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked,

Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#24) THE ROAD TO EMMAUS \*\*\*\* \* \* \***

The author of the gospel of Luke writes that Jesus appeared to two disciples who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. One of the disciples is named Cleopas while his companion remains unnamed. The author of Luke places the story on the evening of the day of Jesus' resurrection. The two disciples have heard the tomb of Jesus was found empty earlier that day. They are discussing the events of the past few days when a stranger asks them what they are discussing. "Their eyes were kept from recognizing him." He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. Cleopas said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed

him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer\* these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#25) SUPPER AT EMMAUS \*\*\*\*\***

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the

way and opened the scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon! Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#26) FISHING AT LAKE TIBERIAS \*\*\*\* \* \* \***

At Lake Tiberias, several of his disciples were fishing when Jesus appeared on shore. Among the disciples were Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, Zebedee's sons and two others. Jesus counseled his disciples to let down their nets for they had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. Their nets were filled to overflowing. John was also present at this time.

**\*\*\*\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE (#27) PAUL ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS \*\*\*\* \* \* \***

At a later time, on the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus, arch-persecutor of the early disciples, was converted to Christ following an extraordinary vision of and discourse with Jesus. This blinded him for three days.

**\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE #28 DEPICTING THE GREAT COMMISSION \*\***



The great work of bringing all nations to the light will not be an achievement of man but will be enabled and validated by the Son of man ...."I am with you all days to the end of the world."

**\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE #29 DEPICTING THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD\*\***

His final appearance is reported as being forty days after the resurrection when he was "carried up" into heaven. Matthew recounted in 28:16-20 how the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." The discipleship to which the Apostles were called is now to be open to not only the Jews but to the Gentiles alike.....to all nations. This discipleship is based upon two principal missions.....baptism in the name of Christ and evangelization or teaching of the Good News.

**\*\* DISPLAY SLIDE #30 DEPICTING THE QUOTE FROM THE CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS\*\***

**\*\*\*DISPLAY SLIDE (#31) DEPICTING THE PARISH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT\*\*\***

You might find this unfortunate announcement recently appearing in a parish church bulletin a bit interesting.....

**\*\*\*DISPLAY SLIDE (#32) DISCUSSING THE PROMINENCE OF WOMEN IN THE BIBLE\*\*\***

Matthew links three key events by mentioning women. The women saw Jesus die. They saw him being placed in the tomb. Now they are the first witnesses to the resurrection. The women are both witnesses to the resurrection as well as messengers...”go and tell his disciples and then all nations”. Women are the first evangelizers.

The canonical gospels portray women as having a central place in Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection. Women are said to have been close followers of Jesus and to have helped finance his ministry; women are said to have been the only ones who stayed with Jesus at his execution; women are said to have been the first people to find the empty tomb and to see the resurrected Christ; and women held positions of authority and influence in the churches of Paul.

Paul couldn't be more explicit when he refers to Phoebe, the carrier of his letter to Rome, as a "deacon" of the church. He couldn't be more explicit when he calls Priscilla of Rome his "fellow worker" in Christ Jesus, implying that she is in an authoritative teaching role just as he is. He couldn't be more explicit when he says that the Roman church meets in her house, implying she is the leader of that church. He couldn't be more explicit when he calls Junia an "apostle" – that is, a preacher or missionary. He couldn't be more explicit when he refers to women prophesying – that is, providing theological guidance to congregations.

This was an era in biblical societies where women were marginalized and viewed as chattel. The Evangelists were among the few progressives of their time. Their commitment to the message of Jesus and His example was manifest in their view of women ...raising them up...giving them prominence in the Gospels.

Two millennia separate us from the time in which Christ walked the hills and valleys of ancient Palestine. The oral and written accounts of the events that formed the content of the Gospel stories have undergone many changes over those centuries and morphed into countless versions of the resurrection story with interpretations, theories, hypotheses, and speculation abounding.

Notwithstanding this, the events surrounding the resurrection have a core consistency and are quite likely related in a more comprehensive and intelligible manner by Matthew than the other writers. Matthew presents a complete picture of the resurrection story with a continuity that is missing or, at best, only inferred in the gospels of Mark, Luke, and John.

**\*\*\*DISPLAY SLIDE (#33) QUESTION #1 MATTHEW'S MESSAGE\*\*\***

*Discussion notes as backdrop for the first of the two questions to be posed for the WINGS group:*

- *Fulfillment of the Old Testament Isaian promise*
- *Matthew was intent on showing that Jesus' death and resurrection took place according to the scriptures*
- *"Death has been swallowed up in victory"*
- *The resurrection is a "sign" of God's promise to raise up all who have died in Christ to everlasting life.*
- *"I am the resurrection and the light".....all life comes from him and all life finds its true meaning in him.*

**\*\*\*DISPLAY SLIDE (#34) QUESTION #2 CENTRALITY OF THE MESSAGE\*\*\***

*Discussion notes as backdrop for the second of the two questions to be posed for the WINGS group:*

- *"Matthew's gospel message is not history or science but FAITH." If this central tenet of our Catholic Faith were not true then....*
  - *we would be without HOPE*
  - *our entire believe system is hollow and*

- *our FAITH is meaningless and in vain.*
- *Instead, we have our conviction that Jesus will come again on the last day in his resplendent glory to judge us and, if we have listened to and heeded his message, and spread His gospel, we can be confident that he will take us to Him.*

**Thank you all again for inviting me and for this opportunity!!**