

MORNING

At Sky View my venetian blinds are usually lowered and closed during the night, remaining that way until 10 or 11 in the morning. Several times recently three things converged: the shades were left up, I was propped on my left side in bed facing the eastern windows, and I woke up at just the right time to see “the dawn’s early light.” Yes, I thought of our national anthem, but more than that, I thought of the women who were on their way to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus at that time of day. The gospel writers differ somewhat in their descriptions of the journey’s onset (“at dawn,” “just after sunrise,” “very early in the morning,” and “while it was still dark”), but all agree that it was EARLY. That’s enough to impress me, a person who has ALWAYS liked to get up late. There were exceptions, of course: times when I either had to or wanted to get up early for the performance of a duty or the start of an adventure. I don’t know the personal habits of the women in our story, but I do know that their bags of spices were packed and ready; they were eager to go as soon as possible.

The change from darkness through dawn to daylight is dramatic and, on a clear day, a real treat for the eyes. The many shades of gray, blue, pink and orange in the early morning sky serve as a fitting backdrop for the huge spectrum of emotions the women experienced in such a short time on that first day of the week. Sorrow surely filled their hearts as they started out on their mission which included a big obstacle: who would roll away the stone so they could enter the tomb and do their work? And then the darkness of their souls was replaced by shock after shock: the stone was already moved; the body of Jesus was gone; and angels were there instead, bringing them an incredible message! The writers describe the women as “alarmed,” “trembling and bewildered,” and “afraid yet filled with joy.”

Inside their brains the angelic message was causing memories to stir. Had Jesus really told them he would be raised on the third day? Why, yes, he had! They just had not understood what he meant. Jesus must have gone from death to life, from Night to Day! Jesus was alive! And with that truth Day replaced Night in their souls as well as in the skies. “Jesus has risen!” Glory, hallelujah! They would NEVER be the same. And neither will I.