

How often do we experience a situation and believe it to be the final outcome?

Easter teaches us that God's plans are never thwarted by the full-stop which we ourselves place at the end of a chapter in our lives.

We may write, "The End," but God may have planned a sequel. We may close the book but God may just turn the page.

For all we know, our lives may include some chapters that God has only just begun.

It's ironic that of all the people in the Gospels, the Pharisees were the only group who acted with any kind of expectation that Jesus might rise from the dead.

While the Jews persuade Pilate to seal up the tomb the disciples sealed themselves up in the Upper Room, not unlike ourselves

as we observe social distancing.. The women were preparing spices for Jesus whom they believed was dead; the Pharisees were setting defences just in case Jesus came alive.

The disciples were clearly not expecting Jesus to rise from the dead, even though He said He would. And despite the many prophecies from the Old Testament which also foretold it.

That is why Matthew says in his Gospel that Mary of Magdala, when she **"saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb"** she **"came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved"** and said, **"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him."**

Notice how she does not speak of any resurrection, but simply that people have taken the Lord out of the tomb.

Matthew also tells us, **"Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead."**

It was not just the Apostles and the disciples of Jesus who did not expect Jesus to rise from the dead.

It would be an understatement to say that *all the Jews* were surprised to learn about the Resurrection because when Peter preached about the Resurrection we read in the *Acts of the Apostles* that: **"they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'"**

God's next chapter in the Jesus story had been written, but not appreciated; studied throughout generations, but not understood.

And God is writing new chapters for us too. Yes, new chapters beyond the current

crisis of the pandemic.

Easter, and the days to follow, are a wonderful opportunity to discover another chapter which God has written for us.

We all have concerns on our hearts, but they are not always brought out into the open to be resolved. *How many of our questions are like those of the disciples, spoken only in darkness?*

We may feel at a 'dead-end' in some areas in our lives. But God does not intend us to set up camp there, no less than He was intent in letting His Son remain in a dark and dismal tomb.