From the Editor: Let loose in the world

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Easter came late this year — one day ahead of its “best before”. Better late than never, it stretches out towards Pentecost, before coiling its way through Ordinary Time.

What a difference a weekend can make!

We find his followers huddled behind closed doors, afraid to come out, afraid of the authorities, in fear for their own lives.

It had all come crashing down the week before — the high hopes, the close friendships — above all, the great expectations. Nothing buries you deeper than a dream that has been shattered. Jesus wasn’t the only one whose life came to an end that Friday. And the news from the tomb was gloom and doom — all that remained were some burial cloths. There was no body.

Where’s he gone?

“Where’s he gone? Their familiar Jesus had been put to death. Maybe we can see ourselves in them: an empty tomb, burial cloths, a missing body. Burial is so final. The one we knew and loved is gone and lost forever.

Or is he? Those same telltale things could also mean the one they had killed did not stay dead. The one they had crucified and buried had somehow or other escaped the tomb, leaving behind his burial cloths and former way of life. And if the dead one does not stay dead nothing is as it was.

In the drama, The Trial of Jesus, by John Masefield, Longinus, the Roman centurion, reports to Pilate:

“Centurion, were you at the killing of that man?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Tell me about his death.”

“We saw a fine young fellow, sir; not past middle age. And he was all alone. And when we had done with him, he was a poor broken-down thing, dead on the cross.”

Pilate’s wife, Procula, sends for Longinus to hear about Jesus’ death. After hearing him speak of the empty tomb, she asks:

“Do you think he’s dead?”

“No, lady, I don’t.”

“Then where is he?”

“Let loose in the world, lady…”

The story doesn’t end on Good Friday. Locked rooms are no barrier to his coming. Two of them meet him as they walk away from Jerusalem. Back home in Galilee an early morning return from a fruitless all-night fishing turns into a BBQ breakfast which he has prepared for them.

Most readers of our magazine are in Canada, some few in the U.S., Europe and across Africa.

A life-time from now our Spiritan centre will be Africa, maybe Asia. Not just the source of Spiritan life, but the source of Christian life itself. It will take on a different emphasis. It will embody new and different ways of thought, new and different priorities, fresh cultures.

“Like Mary Magdalene we too want to hold on to him, but we must let him rise from the dead. We must let him go to the Father so that he can send out his Spirit on all humankind, not just on us.” Vincent Donovan CSSp.

The Risen One, let loose in the world, will touch down on earth. Of that we can be sure. Something of the excitement of the early church is already coursing through the veins of people in the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam. From there many yet unborn will renew the face of the earth.