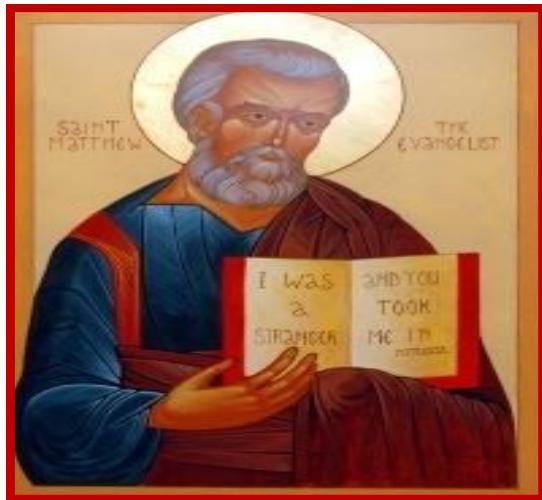


with the guard of soldiers, whom they ordered to keep diligent watch, and by sealing the stone.

They sealed it with a signet, not Pilate's, as S. Chrysostom suggests, but with their own, *i.e.*, with the signet of the city of Jerusalem, or of the Sanhedrin, so that the stone could not be moved, nor the body be taken away, without its being detected. So, too, Darius (Dan. vi. 17). Nicephorus adds that the Jews bored through both the stones of the tomb, and fastened them with an iron band. And thus, by endeavouring to prevent the resurrection of Christ, they did but add to the miracle, and furnished greater evidence for it; which God, as it were, extorted from them. So S. Chrysostom, "An undoubted demonstration is furnished by your own doings. For if the sepulchre were sealed, no room was left for fraud and deceit. But if no fraud had been committed, and the tomb was found empty, it is clear beyond all question that He had risen. Thou seest how, even against their will, they help to demonstrate the truth." "It was not enough," says S. Jerome, "for the Chief Priests and Pharisees to have crucified the Lord, unless they took a band of soldiers, sealed the stone, and, as far as they could, opposed His resurrection; so that all they did was for the furtherance of our faith. For the more it is kept back, the more fully is the power of the resurrection displayed."

Tropologically: Says Barradius, "From this deed of the ungodly let us learn godliness. After we have received Christ into our breast, as into a new tomb, let us take diligent heed that He may remain therein by grace, and never forsake us. Let us post our vigilant guards—that is, our watchful virtues—to drive away sleep and sloth from us; let us gird ourselves with a weapon stronger than iron; let us fortify our breasts with an unconquerable resolve to sin no more."



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Continuation of Matthew 27: 62-66

Verse 62- *Now the next day, that followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate.* The day of the preparation was the Friday, so called because they then prepared everything needed for the Sabbath, on which day they had to rest.

But it was the day after, that is, on the Sabbath, that they came together unto Pilate. Theophylact says, "He names not the Sabbath, for there was no Sabbath (or rest) in the Jews' madness." They raged, indeed, like madmen against Jesus, to abolish utterly His name and memory. And it increased their rage to see Him so honourably buried, as though it were the prelude to His future resurrection, whether it were actually to occur, or would be a mere invention of the disciples.

Verse 63- *Saying, Sir, we remember that deceiver said, when He was yet alive. "That impostor" (S. Augustine, Hom. xxxvi. inter 1.). "By this name," he says also (in Ps. lxxiii. 7), "was the Lord Jesus Christ called, to console His servants when called deceivers."*

After three days I will rise again. Three days not completed, but only begun, *i.e.*, within three days, or the third day after.

Verse 64- *Command therefor, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead.* Wishing before this to prove Him an impostor, they carry out their malice even to the grave. They were greatly afraid that He would rise again, and therefore ask for a guard, either to keep Him from rising, or to seize Him at the moment and put Him to death. For what they add about the disciples stealing Him was a mere pretext, for they knew that they had fled in fear and consternation, and would never think or attempt anything of the kind.

So the last error shall be worse than the first. The first error was the Gospel doctrine that Jesus was the Son of God. The last error was His resurrection, and it would be the worst as confirming the first. For if Jesus had spoken falsely in calling Himself the Son of God, God would not "have raised Him." But if He is believed to have risen, He will have a multitude of followers; and if this belief once takes root, it will not afterwards be eradicated. Lastly, it would arouse great hatred and ill-will against the Chief Priests and Romans for having killed Him unjustly; and might indeed lead them to avenge His death by war or rebellion. It would therefore have been better not to have killed Him than to allow Him to rise again. For the devil, foreseeing the future of the Church (the numbers, the faith, the holiness of Christ's followers), endeavoured to crush and choke it in its birth. But "there is no counsel against the Lord" (Prov. xxi. 30).

Verse 65- *Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch (i.e., the soldiers assigned you for His crucifixion; use them now to guard Him in the grave).*

Go your way, make it as sure as ye can. Guard Him as ye know how (Vulg.), *i.e.*, in the best way ye know. I leave to your skill and prudence the mode of doing it. I do not wish to interfere any more in this matter. "As if taught by experience," says S. Chrysostom, "he does not wish to act with them any further."

Some take the word (ἐχρετε) imperatively, Take ye, summon ye the guard. But it is more forcible to consider it in the indicative mood, "Ye have," &c. (So Vulg., Arab., and A. V.)

Verse 66- *So they went their way, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.* They secured the sepulchre in a twofold way—