

Introduction

Concerning the hours and days spanning the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, many essays, books, and sermons have explored what may have transpired in the metaphysical, heavenly abodes. However, very few books have ventured into what may have transpired on the human platform.

Undoubtedly, in the wake of Christ's Passion, a multi-layered drama quickly unfolded on different stages involving a cast of human characters—the disciples and the women—each of whom was probably very raw in his emotions and colorful in his responses to unimaginable crises. With all hope gone, it's difficult to believe that everything was neat and tidy. Rather, these were real people with real feelings dealing with a real series of tragic events.

This novel is about the painful, but necessary, expressions of shock and sorrow, blaming and bargaining, and the illusions and disillusionment that are part of the grief process. Like a butterfly emerging from its cocoon, the disciples and women whom Jesus loved found themselves contending with the wrappings of doubt and fear that enveloped them. To deny their pain and struggle is to ignore an integral process that was necessary for their wings to find strength and take flight in the wake of the coming resurrection.

Beyond the Passion engages the curious in the human drama bridging the death and resurrection of Christ. It's a fictitious probe into questions such as, "Who found Judas' corpse?" "What was his funeral like?" "Concerning Peter, where did he go after the denial?" And, "How was he reconciled in time to join the post-Sabbath excursion to the empty tomb?"

In the pages that follow, step inside the skin of the men and women of Christ's Passion. See their pain. Feel their sufferings. And find their hope.

You may recognize yourself in them, want to be like them,

or want to hate them. As you experience the temptations and tests of each, you may gradually find it safer to acknowledge your own darker side, without which you could not fully appreciate the hope and inspiration of grace that makes this story possible. In the final analysis, you may even come to agree that the absence of detail within that 40-hour span between the crucifixion and resurrection may really be an act of charity, offering grace to a cast of characters who, in so many ways, are simply a mirrored reflection of our own lives today.

—*Brian Buriff, 2005*