

**WATERED-DOWN VERSIONS OF THE FAITH**  
**Mark 16:1-20**

Somewhere on God's green earth lives a lady named Runa Ware, who has written a book entitled *All Those in Favor, Say Something*. I have not read her book. Here's a little slice of her story. She begins:

I once gave detailed instructions on making a crab casserole to a friend who had often praised the dish when enjoying it in my home. Not long afterward, at a luncheon in her home, she greeted me enthusiastically. "Runa, guess what? I'm serving your gorgeous casserole today."

As we entered the dining room, however, she confided that she had made a few small changes. Feeling that fresh crab meat had been grossly overpriced, she had substituted canned tuna fish. Campbell's mushroom soup had replaced my delicate white sauce ... well ... because it was easier. While the sherry and blanched almonds had been omitted because she had forgotten to put them on her grocery list.

Moments later, as the serving spoon plunged into the steaming "piece de resistance" she casually looked around the table and announced to the assembled guests: "If this casserole isn't any good, don't blame me. This is Runa Ware's recipe."

Sometimes I think we preachers are related to that poor lady, if not by blood, then by practice. For we have this habit of coming to the finest of feasts and serving up watered-down versions of the faith ... omitting the most difficult ingredients altogether ... and then delivering the finished product half-heartedly, as if apologizing for the meager portion of truth we are bringing to the table.

Jesus calls us to go as Easter People in Matthew 28: 19-20[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.

Are we as Easter People boldly living our faith? All too often our ministries are watered down, tentative, and utterly lacking in confidence. Our faith should reflect our trust and obedience in Christ so we might bring others to meet the risen Lord as did the Ladies in our gospel reading.

God bless,  
Pastor Barbara