

Quest – 4th April

Dear Quest member,

Today's Quest reading continues the description of the events of Easter in St John's Gospel. It describes the events of Easter morning

But to begin: Let us each take a pebble for the pebble prayers. It doesn't have to be a pebble, you could hold a favourite object.

As usual I will leave the last prayer blank so that you can add something of your own.

“Let us give thanks that some are able to return to Church for worship and look forward to the day when Quest will be able to meet face-to-face again.

“Let us also give thanks that this weekend for the first time since lockdown some families have been able to meet and perhaps share a picnic or barbeque .

“Let us pray for any who are sick, anxious, lonely or just “fed up”.

“.....

“Lord Jesus, hold us and all these people in your hands as we hold these pebbles in our hands. Keep them safe. Amen”

The Gospel story is the very familiar one. It is the story of Mary coming to Jesus' tomb on that Sunday morning (the day after the Jewish Sabbath on Saturday) and finding that the tomb apparently had been broken into. She had been too scared to go in but John, the first of the disciples to arrive went in and found the cloths that Jesus' body had been wrapped I were still lying there.

Then Mary met the man whom she thought was the gardener. It wasn't until he said her name “Mary” that she realised that it was Jesus and that he was not dead but alive.

Here is the story in the version from the Roots material, the Gospel of John, chapter 20 verses 1 to 18:

By the time she reached Peter and John, Mary was out of breath and very upset. ✪ She'd been running. 'They've taken Jesus,' she announced. 'I went to the tomb, but the stone's been moved from the entrance and the Lord's gone.' Distressed, Peter and John went running to the tomb. John got there first and saw the cloth that Jesus' body had been wrapped in, abandoned inside. ✪



Peter rushed past John into the tomb. He saw the wrappings, but noticed that the cloth that had been on

Jesus' head was rolled up and placed on its own. John came in and saw it too. Neither of them understood the Scripture saying that Jesus must rise from the dead. Having seen the empty tomb, they went home. ✪ Mary, who had followed after them, was too sad to go home. She stayed there, crying.

Through her tears, Mary could see into the tomb. She was shocked. There were angels in there now, sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet. The angels spoke: 'Why are you crying?' 'They've taken away my Lord,' said Mary. 'I don't know where they've put him.' Mary glanced away from the tomb and saw another man standing there. 'Why are you crying?' the man asked her. 'Who are you looking for?' Thinking he was a gardener, Mary said, 'If you've taken him away, please tell me where he is.' The man replied with a single word: 'Mary!' As soon as he'd spoken it, Mary saw that the man was Jesus.

'Don't hold onto me, Mary,' Jesus said. 'Go and tell my brothers that I'm going up to my Father, to my God and your God.' And so Mary went running off again – this time to tell the disciples that she'd seen the Lord. **John 20.1-18**

✪ See *Share the Word*.

In some ways modern Christians are fortunate to have the events of Jesus' life set out in the Church's year: His birth at Christmas, and then all the events of his life through to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

But I also worry that these "stories" become too familiar... after all, we know what is going to happen next!

I think we should try to put ourselves into the shoes of Mary and Peter and John and the rest. On Good Friday they thought it was all over. Jesus had been killed. Perhaps all he had told them wasn't true. Perhaps he wasn't The Messiah after all. He hadn't behaved like any other King that they had heard about. Then it got worse... Jesus tomb had been opened and his body had gone – stolen?

But then...

They slowly began to realise that something wonderful had happened. Jesus had risen from the dead. Death was not the end. The slowly dawning realisation that Jesus was with them - and us - always and for ever.

One of my personal favourite passages in the Bible is in Paul's letter to the Romans, towards the end of Chapter 8. You can read it in full but it says that persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril, the sword... nothing in death or life, in

the realm of spirits or superhuman powers nothing in all creation... **not even death** can separate us from the love of God.

That is what happened on Easter morning!

See how well you know the Easter story:

Who was this:

1. "I betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver; who am I?"
2. "Jesus rode into Jerusalem on me; who am I?"
3. "I denied Jesus three times before the cock crowed; who am I?"
4. "The people called for me to be set free instead of Jesus; who am I?"
5. "I was crucified beside Jesus; who am I?"
6. "I told the women at the tomb not to be afraid and that Jesus had risen; who am I?"

Answers on the next page.

May God bless us all. Amen.

Norman

1. Judas
2. A donkey
3. Peter
4. Barabbas
5. A thief
6. An angel