

HYMNS: 425 'The Saviour died, but rose again;' 434 'Jesus is risen from the grave;'
422 'Christ is alive, and the universe must celebrate;'
415 'This joyful Eastertide'

Stations of the Resurrection.

Station 1: Earthquake

Reading Matthew 28.1-2

Reflection

Earthquakes are not unusual in the area around Jerusalem. What was unusual was the timing. The two women at the tomb at that moment were, according to Matthew's account, Mary Magdalene and 'the other Mary'. We know something of Mary Magdalene and legend adds the rest. But the 'other Mary' is something of an enigma. It isn't the Mother of Jesus, she was probably still at the safe house within the city walls. In the crucifixion accounts Mark names her as the 'mother of James and Joses and of Salome', Matthew refers to James and Joseph, while John tells us that she is the 'wife of Clopas' or Cleopas. Cleopas, of course, will encounter Jesus later in the day on the road to Emmaus. One ancient tradition states that Cleopas is the brother of Joseph (the husband of Mary the mother of Jesus). This would make this 'other Mary' the aunt of Jesus. So at the tomb that morning might have been a close friend and a member of the family. The tension of the characters in these stories is almost palpable.

Prayer

Lord, it is sometimes earth shattering to discover that your resurrection is made clear to all and that no one is excluded from witnessing your truth. Keep from us the arrogance that leads to the fantasy that we have a special place in your kingdom. **Amen.**

Station 2: Empty tomb

Reading Matthew 28.5-8

Reflection

Mixed emotions, including fear and joy, accompanied the women from the tomb. Fear because they had not expected such an encounter, joy because of the news they had received. It was still early; the city was only just stirring from the holiday weekend, had they gone to the right tomb? Surely they couldn't have made such a mistake; they had, after all, watched the burial two days earlier. Were they dreaming? Was it all wishful thinking? Who would believe them?

Prayer

Lord, our faith in you is often ridiculed. Sceptical sophistication is preferred to sincerely held faith. In times of confusion, when we just can't be as clear and confident in our mind as we'd like, help us to press on with trust in the hope and belief that others will at some point find what is only just beginning to dawn upon us. **Amen.**

Station 3: The disciples

Reading John 20.3-8

Reflection

Having heard the testimony of the women, Peter and the other disciple, probably John, decide to check out the story for themselves. At a later date Peter would be nicknamed Protos Petros, First Peter, highlighting the significance the Early Church placed on his role within it. The 'other disciple' had lain across the breast of Jesus at their last meal together;

he had also stood at the foot of the cross with Mary the mother of Jesus. Both had good reason to run to the tomb. John arrived first but couldn't bring himself to go in until Peter rushed past him.

Prayer

Lord, no matter how close we feel to you we so often need the encouragement of others to lead us into new and deeper experiences. We thank you for those who through their innocence, naivety and petulance inspire us to move.

Station 4: Mary Magdalene

Reading John 20.11-16

Reflection

Despite being close to Jesus, Mary Magdalene has difficulty recognising the risen Lord. Her grief and confusion are getting the better of her; she can neither believe the evidence nor, even, her earlier experience. The possibility of the body being stolen still weighs on her mind, resurrection is still something that she cannot grasp.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for speaking to us. Your voice reassures us of your presence and we are more able to recognise you when you call us by name. When we weep, dry our tears; when we grieve, comfort us and when we sense isolation, accompany us. **Amen.**

Station 5: Emmaus

Reading Luke 24.13-16, 28-32

Reflection

The two disciples, had been walking towards the west; the day was drawing to an end so the sun was setting before them. Were their eyes being shielded from the light or were they so deep in debate that they failed to look up and see who their fellow traveller was? It is only as they pause to eat that they fully appreciate what had been shared with them on the road.

Prayer

Lord, forgive us if we so desire to protect ourselves that we shield our eyes from your light or if we are so focussed on inward debate that we overlook those about us. May we give our time to you and exercise hospitality to fellow travellers so that through our mutual sharing, we may find your purposes fitting into place. **Amen.**

Station 6: Thomas

Reading John 20.24-29

Reflection

Thomas had always been a bit of a character. Some put it down to the fact that he may have been a younger brother of Jesus and, having grown up with him in the household, retained a healthy disrespect for him. 'Come let us all get killed!' he chided when Jesus risked a return to Bethany. 'How can we possibly know the way?' questioned Thomas at the last supper. Then, on hearing of the resurrection, Thomas had demanded hard evidence not hearsay. After placing his hands in the wounds of Jesus, tradition very dear to the Indian churches tells us that Thomas travelled thousands of miles to found the Church in India. He would give his life to and for the brother he had doubted.

Prayer

Lord, may we retain a healthy disrespect so that we might not accept everything without question. But in our pursuit of truth help us not to be so cynical that we cannot accept anything. You are the way, the truth and the life and though we may not always know the way ahead, then at least you have gone before us. **Amen.**

Station 7: Galilee

Reading John 21.1-14

Reflection

As if to confirm that the resurrection appearances were not just hallucinations in the high emotion of Jerusalem, Jesus stands at the water's edge. The disciples have been engaged in a mundane task in a familiar place. It is sunrise, and as Jesus is on the western shore the light would be shining on him: he isn't silhouetted, there could be no mistake, this is the Jesus who had walked along that very beach with those very same disciples. They, of all people, know exactly who he is. He had spoken to thousands, fed thousands, healed the sick and discussed the things of God with them, right here. There could be no mistake.

Prayer

Lord, when our tasks seem routine and mundane, when we feel as if our life has little or no purpose and when we are disheartened because there appears to be little gain from what we do, stand beside us, guide us and feed us. **Amen.**

Station 8: Breakfast on the beach

Reading John 21.15 - 19

Response

How can you best live out, the call to follow Christ today?