

Acts 10: 34-43 and John 20: 1-18

Alleluia, Christ is risen, he is risen indeed Alleluia, we know that, because we know the stories and parables handed down to us through scripture. Mary and the disciples did not know this. Even though Jesus throughout his life had referenced his own death and resurrection, they still didn't know where the body had gone. Jesus had even performed miracles, where he had raised people from dead, and yet they still had no idea what had happened to their friends body. It seems totally incredulous that they weren't aware of what was happening. That not one of Jesus's friends even voiced the idea that he might have been resurrected. They were probably all understandably in shock, however what I find most extraordinary is that not one of the disciples went to search for

Jesus, they came to the tomb saw it was empty and went home. If my friends body had gone missing I would want to know where it had gone wouldn't you?

The narrative in John focuses on the empty tomb, the total darkness and feeling of being alone. This can happen when we lose someone and I don't just mean through death. Sometimes we lose a friend or a partner because of differences, that sometimes can be sorted out if we only sat down and listened and heard what the other person is saying. Sadly sometimes these relationships cannot be reconciled and then we are left with a feeling of emptiness. A longing even for past times and the opportunity to share a future. When we lose someone especially through death, not only are we left with a sense of emptiness, but we also ask the question where is Jesus in all of this, by this I mean the messiness of life. When we lose someone, it is difficult to watch everyone else carry on as though nothing has happened, we may even feel the need to shout stop just for a minute and grieve with me, at other times we want to shut ourselves away just as the disciples did and remember the person we have lost.

Seeing the empty tomb did not bring either Mary or the other disciples to faith, this came later. When we lose someone our faith can be shaken, we may turn away from God in our anger at the injustice we feel is being placed upon us. Hopefully we work through these feelings and our faith returns. When we are faced with the loss of a loved one, this is never a good thing and yet it can encourage us to spend time focusing on what is important to us and what we can live without, in our lives. When we lose someone it is easy to want a sign that they have moved on, a sign that they have been resurrected to a new life in Christ rather than just a natural acceptance that this is what happens after death. For Mary signs were not what brought her to faith, Mary came to faith through trusting and believing in the word of God. This word prompted her to remember a relationship that had already begun and one that would continue because of the resurrection of Christ. For those of us that have begun a journey with Christ we also know of the resurrection story and that for us when we die to our old selves we will be resurrected to a new life in Christ, not just after death, but in the here and now. Easter is a time of new beginnings, not just for the disciples but for us too. It is a timely reminder that we should stop living our lives with the what might have been and move forward to what our lives can be. Easter is a time to search out those with whom we have difficult relationships, to offer them a fresh beginning. It may be that we are the ones who need to say sorry and ask for a new

beginning. Yes we may be rejected but so was Christ, he didn't give up he didn't stop loving those that rejected him, in fact he probably loved them more. Hate is a harsh word that solves nothing, Love is a word that brings comfort and healing. The best answer we can give our enemies is that we still love them and forgive them. It is only when we do as Jesus asked us to do that is love one another that we can begin to proclaim a gospel of love. This Easter we should go out proclaim the gospel of the resurrection to all whom we meet, so that the holy spirit can come to lead heal and help empower the church of God to which we all belong. Alleluia he is risen indeed, let us not let his death and resurrection be in vain this Easter, let it be a fresh beginning for us and God's church

Amen.