

Address: Waiting for God

Readings: Acts 10:34-43 & John 20:1-18

We've heard a **lot of words** this morning, telling the **story** of this most special of days. And we **don't gather to just listen** to stories, we gather also to **learn how we apply them**, how they might improve us and our attitude to others and our world.

During **Lent and Easter**, I've been **massively encouraged** by the **power of these ancient stories** to **connect community** and to **challenge** and **change** we who hear them almost **2000 years after** the events took place. **Hundreds** of adults and children have walked among our **Easter stations** around the church and our members have been **among schools** and **care homes** and local **shops** to **tell and be told** of the **love** that was revealed in the **Crucifixion and Resurrection**.

Such a lot has been **shared** and so I thought we'd have a little **recap** on what we have been **remembering over this past week** by using, once

again, the fantastic **displays** that have so blessed our worship of late.

I'll need **3 volunteers** to play **Peter, John & Mary** and, remembering their **running to the tomb** this morning, we're going to have a **race!**

Start by putting on 1st century **outfits** and then...

Station 1: Servant King - **wash & dry feet**

Station 2: Upper room – eat a **cracker**

Station 3: Garden – in and out of **sleeping bags**

Station 4: Cross – answer a **question**

- In whose tomb was Jesus buried?
- What was torn in two when Jesus died?
- Who was crucified alongside Jesus?

Station 5: Tomb – **shout “He is risen, alleluia!”**

Well done to X for winning the race to the tomb! But **who won the original race** that we read about in the Gospel this morning? Who got to the tomb first? Well, technically, **John** is the quickest and arrives there first, but he **doesn't go into the tomb**.

It is **Peter** who is the **first to enter** – he rushes in and doesn't seem to react or understand. He will have confirmed that Jesus' body isn't there, but has **not understood** beyond that. **John**, however, **takes his time**. He seems to be allowing the situation to soak in and we're told that he **“believes”**.

Yet, the most **profound encounter** is reserved for the one who seems to have **come last** in this race – **Mary**. Mary has returned with the disciples, but **doesn't leave** when they leave. Instead, she hangs back, perhaps in shock, perhaps in thought, perhaps just because she was tired. And it is **she who meets with Jesus** – she who is **last**, she who is a **woman**, she who has often been presented as a **lowly** figure.

The familiar words from Matthew's Gospel of the **first being last** and the last being first seem particularly applicable here, but again, this **isn't just an interesting feature** of the story as the responses of these three biblical figures can also **say something of our world's reaction to Easter today**. Some will **rush in**, have a **quick look** and

only notice what isn't there – nothing to see, nothing to think about, move on. **Others** will pause to **reflect** and believe that something has happened, that **something amazing is possible**. But those who are **truly blessed** are those who **stop all else to be in the moment**, to stand at the open tomb and **wait on God**.

This is **what Mary did** and this is what we are **all invited to do**. If we **rush to get answers**, to understand in full what the cross means, what the empty tomb means at the first instance, then we are likely to be **disappointed**, or, perhaps **worse, satisfied** with a flimsy and all too **easy faith**. If we **stop** for a while and seek to **understand**, we may end up with some answers that will **comfort, satisfy and sustain** to some extent. **But if we wait without insisting** on understanding everything of the mystery, if we **open our hearts and minds** to the possibility of God and if we **recognise** that the **fullness of love** isn't made in an instant, then we may well **meet with the risen Lord**, the God of all things. Amen