

Mike's message

Hope

We've celebrated Easter and, as always we did so with the benefit of hindsight.

We believe that Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead. But what was in the mind of those first disciples? What were their hopes and fears on that first day of the week, the day that would become known as the first Easter Day?



Sometimes we race through the days prior to Easter but, if we do, we miss so much of the meaning of Holy Week. The farewell and betrayal of Maundy Thursday. The tortures and trials of the night leading into Good Friday and the suffering and journey of Jesus to death on the Cross. The emptiness of Holy Saturday. The confusion of the disciples when confronted by the empty tomb.

After Jesus' death Jesus' friends would have grieved as we all do when someone we know has died. John's Gospel mentions that when confronted with the empty tomb, the disciples "did not yet know that he would rise from the dead". In fear for their own lives, and in the sorrow of bereavement, they would have been confused and heartbroken. What were they hoping for next?

On the Sunday morning the women who went to the tomb hoped to pay their respects at the place of burial. That would have meant anointing the corpse with spices including myrrh. They would also have hoped that someone would be around to roll back the stone from the tomb. But on their arrival the stone had already been rolled away and to their astonishment the body was nowhere to be seen.

The Gospels depict the following days as full of confusion and uncertainty. There are more questions than answers as they search for the meaning of the empty tomb. There's a message for the Church today. Sometimes the fullness of the Resurrection is hard to see in a world full of suffering and injustice. But there is hope. There are signs of the Resurrection all around us. In the elderly person who's able to escape their loneliness by coming to the Day Centre. In the person arriving downcast and hopeless at the Food Bank but leaving with hope and sustenance. In the child whose confidence grows in Young Church or Boys Brigade. These are all signs of Resurrection as people are filled with hope. That is our role as a Church and as individual Christians. To proclaim the hope of new life in the Risen Jesus.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!