

## Risen from the dead

1 4 18

Lord of all life and power,  
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son  
overcame the old order of sin and death  
to make all things new in him:  
grant that we, being dead to sin  
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory.

Happy Easter: Jesus is risen from the dead – alleluia !

Our text may be found in today's gospel – Mark chapter 16 and verse 6 – words of an angel that first Easter morning:

**'He has been raised: he is not here.'**

That first Easter morning, how many women came to visit the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid ? Well, you've just heard Mark's account and there are two: Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Salome. Matthew agrees with Mark, just two, but he doesn't specify who exactly the other Mary is. Luke names three women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James. John names just Mary Magdalene. So whoever made our resurrection stained glass window at the back of our church above our children's corner is following

Matthew's account, because the two women there are actually depicted in the act of seeing the risen Lord Jesus for themselves.

Well, if Christmas tells about birth, then Easter informs about death and new life. Fact is, if you are here today in church, you have necessarily been born. Fact is that one day, and who knows when, inevitably every one of us here today will die. Fact is if you are in a Christian church on Easter Day, attending a service of Holy Communion, then probably it is likely that you will believe in the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the tomb, the stone having been rolled away, the grave clothes lying where Jesus lay, his temporary tomb empty.

I'm not sure when I first learnt about death as a boy. I was born after the Second World War so I only witnessed some of the effects of the fighting, not the actual destruction but only the bomb sites in the streets around where we lived in East London. But I'm guessing it was the death of a family pet: a cat, a dog or a budgie that first informed me that one day I would die.

And that fact, our mortality, is at the heart of how God acts to express his love for us. We live a finite life in an ever-changing world. Nothing can last forever though Stonehenge, the Dol Menhir, the Egyptian pyramids and the Great Wall of China have been around for an awfully long time. But we won't and even someone like the Revd Donald Pankhurst, a long time chaplain here entrusted with the care of souls in this place and who lived till the age of 89, still died last July, and a memorial plaque to him will be blessed at the end of our service today in the presence of his widow, Heather.

But with the fact of death is the promise of new life in Christ. The good news, that Christ is risen from the dead, embodies the promise of resurrection, the promise of the life of the world to come. And, for that reason alone, surely it is well worth being a Christian: an affirmation that, in the sight of God, we have real value and that one day when we stop breathing, he will breathe new life into us.

That, my friends, is what I find so very good, so very exciting about our faith:

that Easter marks the death of death.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Amen.

*Preached at the Eucharist*

*St Bartholomew's, Dinard*

*1<sup>st</sup> April 2018*

G: Sermons 37 : Risen

