

**16th April 2006 Easter Day B**  
**Rob Lamerton**

Readings:

- Acts 10:34-43
- For the psalm: Hymn to the Risen Christ page 6
- 1Corinthians 15:1-11
- Mark 16:1-8

Text of readings is available at <http://divinity.library.vanderbilt.edu/lectionary/BEaster/bEasterSun.htm>

Christ is Risen!  
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia! Alleluia! — Praise the Lord!

The more we say the words, the more they enter our mind, our blood stream, our psyche!

But if we think scientifically about the nature of the resurrection, we find many more questions? We want some hard facts, some provable theory.

Our belief about the Resurrection of Christ is NOT able to be pinned down by science — it is something like creation — still a mystery to the scientist but nevertheless a reality! Just when we think we are close to understanding it, some new discovery puts it out of reach again.

In our gospel today, we have the simplest of the Resurrection stories — the only trouble is we DO NOT have a sighting of the Risen Jesus. Instead we have, as they say in the Bill, "some leads" — "some evidence".

Mary Magdalene, and the other women, another Mary, and Salome, are sure Jesus is dead, because they bring spices to anoint his body.

But — as they are pondering opening the tomb, "rolling the stone away" — they discover it has already been done. The moved stone is NOT proof that Jesus has risen, but it must be taken into account as one item of evidence.

They saw a young man dressed in a white robe! Was he just someone who happened to be around — a young man, who in later telling of this story gained the status of a heavenly messenger? And so a white robe was added?

Naturally the situation was alarming for the women and we are told so! But the young man warns them NOT to be alarmed because "He has been raised!" **Now they have a witness!**

But they are encouraged to tell Peter and the disciples to go to Galilee where they will see Jesus.

In fulfilment of his promise from Chapter 14 that after he is raised he will see them there. (in Galilee)

The women have a disappointing outcome.

In this confrontation at the tomb we hear only of their alarm, terror, and amazement.

It is an appropriate ending: alarm, // terror, // amazement:

all the responses are those of people who have been confronted by God!

In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul tells how the message he proclaims had previously been received by him — and we are not told where or how or by whom, but it must have been an early tradition because he wrote this letter in about AD54. So the story of the resurrection could quite easily have got to him in the 30's or early 40's around the time of his Damascus road experience and his incorporation into the body of believers.

The death and resurrection are represented as having:

- both historical *and* scriptural proof.
- the burial establishes the truth of Christ's death
- the appearances establish the truth of his resurrection
- and both are in accordance with the scriptures says Paul.

No-one witnesses the resurrection itself — but plenty see the risen Christ and for Paul himself his experience was of a different order to the apostles.

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles shows how in the preaching of the early Christian it was important to speak of death and resurrection and of the appearances of the Risen Christ.

Again, **NO-ONE** witnessed the resurrection but plenty had the profound experience of the Risen Christ!

It is a strange picture  
we have NOT a great and powerful leader  
**BUT** a humiliated and wounded figure returning and standing among his followers. It is an image which beggars belief but which depicts powerfully the words of Jesus — the greatest among you must be your servant!

Rowan Williams interprets the resurrection as the return of the humiliated and broken one reaching out in forgiveness.

I like to think of the Resurrection as the restoration in a new way of something freely given — willing let go of!

Abraham in taking Isaac to offer to God is letting go of all that is

dear. When asked where is the sacrifice he answered "God will provide" — and in a wonderful way Isaac does NOT get killed — Abraham receives him back!

[love isn't love 'til you give it away!]

Sometimes we need to be willing to let go of things that are dear to us — only to be rediscover them in a new way.

This week I advertised my drum kit and our little white car to help fund our trip! The trip itself is a letting go — of a lot of things! In the hope that we might get them back in a new and better way.

There's that word **HOPE!**

If the resurrection is about anything, it is about HOPE!

HOPE that with God all things are possible...

So let us rejoice and be glad because

Christ is risen! — He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!