

Christ Church Freemantle Easter Day 12th April

After reading the Gospel John 19.1-18

“Do not hold onto me” said Jesus to Mary Magdalene when she met him outside the tomb on that first Easter Day. (*John 19 v 17*) That must have come as a huge shock; the Master she had followed, adored and shared life with seemed to be keeping her at a distance. She would have felt alone and bewildered.

It’s a shock for us this Easter not to be holding on to each other; no worshipping together, no sharing the bread and the cup at the altar in Communion, no handshakes or hugs at The Peace. We have to “go it alone” for a while. We naturally feel isolated and bewildered.

But Jesus’ instruction to Mary was for a reason. “Do not hold onto me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father”. Jesus’ work was not yet complete. According to John’s Gospel, Resurrection and Ascension came together, and not until they were complete could Jesus’ disciples begin a new relationship with their Lord. So Mary went and told the other disciples, and that day they waited in faith for the new age to begin.



We aren’t good at waiting these days; everything has to be instant, online and at the touch of a button. Yet the story of Christianity is one of watching and waiting – the Advent days

waiting both for the coming of Christmas and the Second Coming of Christ; the days of Lent, preparing for the remembrance of Christ's death and Resurrection. This year we just have to wait a little longer.

When the Coronavirus pandemic is over we shall find a very different world. This experience is unprecedented in modern history. And we have to wait in faith for the world to wake up again and life to re-start. But we have one huge advantage over Mary – we know that Jesus DID complete his work – that a new relationship with him IS possible, that those first disciples, and Christians down the ages, have lived their lives in the light of Christ and in relationship with him. The eternal truth still stands, and we can proclaim:

JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

Ian Coomber