

Thought for the week: Go and tell

Matthew's account of the first Easter Sunday morning is very dramatic. An earthquake, a dazzling angel and guards falling to the ground like dead men. If Easter Day was televised in the style of a *Doctor Who* episode you might imagine they would choose Matthew's version of events.

Matthew is a skilled writer and his account clearly grabs the attention. How much of what he describes actually happened is a matter of great scholarly debate. It is possible that there was an earthquake that morning and many legitimately believe this literal happening as earthquakes do happen in that region. However, whether we have a literal or metaphorical view we do know that something truly groundbreaking happened that day. Once again God has broken into human history in a dramatic, groundbreaking way. Jesus, who was crucified, dead and buried, is alive. That is the news given by the angel messenger. Like the petrified guards and the wondering women we might not know exactly how the resurrection happened but we can know, like the women, the glorious truth of Easter Day: that Jesus is risen. For the two Marys, they had the extra privilege of meeting the risen Jesus in physical form. We do not have that privilege but we can learn from what they did.

First, they 'took hold' of Jesus. If you've ever been separated from someone you love or have not expected to see again you will know what it feels like to take hold of that person, wanting to physically hold on to them for proof of their existence. Matthew tells us that the two Marys were in a confused state of 'fear and great joy'. When life's events shake us, we are wise if, like the women, we in faith take hold of Jesus and listen for his voice saying 'Don't be afraid'.

Having taken hold of Jesus they 'worshipped him'. Their relationship with him is renewed. After the sombre season of Lent, Easter is a season for renewed hopeful, joyful, celebratory worship. This is a sign of knowledge and belief in the risen Lord.

Then, having been reassured again by Jesus with the wonderful recurring phrase 'Do not be afraid', the two Marys are told by Jesus to 'go and tell':

- to go and tell their testimony;
- to go and tell the good news that Jesus is risen and all that means;
- to go and tell others that they too can see him again.

This is a commissioning by Jesus of their roles as disciples and evangelists. So this Easter let us respond as those women did: let us take hold of Jesus, let us hear his words to 'not be afraid', let us worship him and know deeply the truth of the resurrection. And let us go and tell others this powerful good news.