

HOLY TRINITY SUNNINGDALE

Date: 5 April 2015

Reading: Acts 10:34-43

John 20: 1-18

Theme: Easter Day

Election fever in the papers and on the TV

Debate, discussion, decision – a week is said to be a very long time in politics.

This past week with children at HT School and at Charters and with the elderly at Lynwood, we have been talking not just about a week in politics, but about the most important week in the history of the world. A week that changed history for ever. A week that focuses on the life, and more importantly the death, of the man Jesus of Nazareth.

- Palm Sunday: he is welcomed into the city.
- Monday: he goes to the temple and moves the furniture about and chucks people out.
- Tuesday and Wednesday: Days of preparation: he gets his mates to fix the venue and the menu.
- Maundy Thursday: the Passover meal (traditional celebration) and all the weird stuff about bread and wine being body and blood.
- Later that evening, things hot up ... A trip to the garden. Betrayal with a kiss by one of his friends in his closest

circle. Arrest, trial, beating, crown of thorns, the cross and finally death. What's good about that Friday, the press was asking?

So when the women and the disciples (John and Simon Peter) go to the tomb on the Sunday morning early, they expect to see a body. But things aren't quite what they expect.

They see lots of things there: linen cloths, talking angels and a gardener ... but they don't see Jesus and they think someone has stolen the body or snook it away. Things aren't quite what they expect.

And a question arises in their minds: where is he? And the answer of course is that he is there ... they just can't see him yet.

Illustration – they are there, you just can't see them yet! Just so in the story, he is there ... they just can't see him yet.

He's there in a different form, disguised as the gardener, mistaken for the gardener. But when he says Mary's name she knows it's him.

I have always loved the telephone. I am not so excited about all the newer technology – not really. But I am a lover of the phone. And I find it really odd still that I don't always have to say who I am when I ring somebody up – they know it's me from my voice straightaway.

He is there ... they just can't see him yet.

And when he says Mary's name she knows it's him.

Jesus is recognised straightaway when his voice is heard by his friend, Mary. And over the years of history thousands of people have got to know him, encountered him, met with him personally through the gentle whisper of his voice.

He is there ... they just can't see him yet.

But when he says their name they know it's him.

Obviously, Mary hears the man she wrongly thinks is the gardener. She has known him for so long now, just a word from him is enough for her to realise the truth about him. He is alive!

But how do people today hear his voice and recognise Jesus for who he is?

In lots of ways:

The world around us – you hear the whisper as you look at the sunrise, the sunset, the moon, the eclipse, desert, the mountain, the waterfall, the tower block or the skyscraper, the roller-coaster, you hear the whisper that says “I made that”. That's him.

Acts of kindness – you feel the tears coming because of what someone has said or done. That's him.

Opportunities for conversation - question and answer where, with others, you can find out more from those who are a little further on in their Christian journey than you. That's him.

The bible story itself – you just know it rings true and that this man is worth checking out and maybe worth getting to know.

Whether we know it or not, or like it or not, the bible tells us that he is there ... it's just the case that some people can't see him yet. But when he says your name you know it's him.

I don't know whether the events of this Holy Week have caught your imagination:

- Maybe you are a Jesus follower already, maybe you are a Christian and you are celebrating that today of all days.
- Maybe this is your first Easter as a Christian and the familiar story has come alive for you as never before.
- Maybe you are not quite sure but you'd like to know more.

A great prayer for you would be a really simple one:

Lord, let me hear your voice (in the world around me, in acts of kindness, in conversation, in the bible) wherever it is to be for me, let me hear your voice, please. Amen.