

2022-04-17 ... 6.30pm Easter Evensong ... Revd Canon Judy Hunt

Isaiah 43: 1 – 21; 1 Corinthians 15: 1 – 11

**'In Christ shall all be made alive'**

I'm going to begin with a piece by Michael Mayne and end with a question:

***'As in Adam (the first Adam) all die, even so in Christ (the second Adam) shall all be made alive'***

**1 Corinthians 15: 22**

*(From "Alleluia is our song" Michael Mayne Canterbury Press 2018)*

'For Easter Day I give you, not the preacher's conventional three points but one glorious truth illustrated by three different gardens.

**The first garden is Eden: 'And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden.'** Eden was never a real garden but a kind of poetic shorthand, for life in Eden speaks of our true relationship with God, life as it is meant to be, and Adam is placed there as the gardener. For Adam represents every human being, each one of us, made in God's image to be stewards of God's creation – but failing, for we find that we are turned away from God, cut off from the source of our being by our self-centred blindness; and so, as it were, cast out of the garden.

**The second garden is real enough, for it is Gethsemane,** and some of you may have walked among its ancient olive trees. There Jesus, called the second Adam, battles alone with his deep human desire to avoid the way of the cross until his sweat becomes like the drops of blood he would shed on Calvary, and then, unlike the first Adam, he keeps faith with the Father's will.

**The third garden is Joseph's, the garden in which Jesus' body lay** in the new rock tomb and to which, while it was still dark, first the women came with spices, then Peter and John – and also according to St. John, Mary Magdalene who, in the most telling mistake in history, believes the risen Christ to be the gardener. Indeed, in a profound sense he is; and there is a sudden echo of the words of Genesis: ***'And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.'*** No metaphor in the Bible carries more weight and offers richer truths than that of Christ as the second Adam, the one who alone of all our race looks at the transcendent mystery and names him as Father and opens our eyes to the reality of his love. This enables St Paul to write: ***'As in Adam (the first Adam) all die, even so in Christ (the second Adam) shall all be made alive.'***

So with that in mind, here are some lovely words of G.K. Chesterton:

***'On the third day, the friends of Christ coming at daybreak to the place, found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways they realised ... that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation, with a new heaven and a new earth; and in a semblance of the gardener God Walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn.'*** (*The Everlasting Man*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1925)

I wish each one of you, as Easter people, members of the new creation, peace and joy.

**The Question:**

***For Mary Magdalene – it was going to the Garden of the Tomb that enabled her to meet the risen Jesus – what will help you to do that?***