



**MONTHLY**

*Musings*

**April 2021**

“It is completed!”

John 19:30, Mark 15:38

## VIEWS from the Vicarage

### Those who claimed to see Him risen must have seen something

On June 26, 2000, American tv broadcaster ABC aired a documentary called *The Search for Jesus*. The network's leading news anchor, Peter Jennings, interviewed liberal and conservative scholars of early Christianity about what we can know historically concerning Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The series ended with a striking statement by New Testament scholar Paula Fredriksen, who is not a Christian herself. Commenting on the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus, Fredriksen said: I know in their own terms what they saw was the raised Jesus. That's what they say, and then all the historic evidence we have afterwards attest to their conviction that that's what they saw. I'm not saying that they really did see the raised Jesus. I wasn't there. I don't know what they saw. But I do know that as a historian that they must have seen something. She's admitting, in other words, that the best available historical evidence confirms that followers of Jesus like Mary Magdalene, his brother James, Peter and his other disciples, and even an *enemy* (Paul) were absolutely convinced that the crucified man Jesus appeared to them alive, raised

from the dead. Fredriksen is not alone in supposing that these followers must have seen *something*. Virtually every Bible scholar across the Western world, regardless of religious background, agrees that Jesus' earliest followers *believed* he appeared to them alive. This is what launched the world's largest religion. As a result of these appearances, Jewish fishermen began proclaiming to crowds in Jerusalem that "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it" (Acts 2:32). Two thousand years later, the message of Jesus' death and resurrection is proclaimed by billions of Christians in nearly every nation and in almost every language on planet earth.

What did all these witnesses see?

According to the earliest source we have on record for Jesus' death and resurrection, a hidden pearl found within 1 Corinthians 15, Jesus appeared to multiple individuals and groups, and at least one enemy. This creedal tradition, according to virtually all scholars, dates to within five years of Jesus' death. Through this source, we can reach back to the earliest years of the Christian movement in Jerusalem, to the bedrock confession of the earliest followers of Jesus.

Here is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8: For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

This catalogue of Resurrection appearances is unparalleled in the New Testament, even in all of ancient literature. We learn from this list that Jesus appeared to three individuals: Cephas (*Peter*), his chief disciple; James, his brother; and Paul, his former enemy. And we also learn that he appeared to three groups: the Twelve (*disciples, minus Judas*); more than 500 early followers; and all the apostles.

That Jesus appeared to more than 500 men and women at the same time is a truly remarkable claim. Paul boldly puts his credibility on the line when he

mentions that most of them are still alive. After all, he is essentially inviting members of the Corinthian church to travel to Jerusalem and speak to these witnesses, investigating for themselves what it was like to see the risen Jesus. We can see, then, that solid eyewitness testimony to the risen Jesus was readily available in the decades following his resurrection. As G. K. Chesterton observed in *The Everlasting Man*, “This is the sort of truth that is hard to explain because it is a fact; but it is a fact to which we can call witnesses.”

Mary Magdalene also belongs on the list of key eyewitnesses, as she too was readily available to be questioned about her experience with the risen Jesus. As the agnostic New Testament scholar Bart D. Ehrman writes in *How Jesus Became God*, it is “significant that Mary Magdalene enjoys such prominence in all the Gospel Resurrection narratives, even though she is virtually absent everywhere else in the Gospels. She is mentioned in only one passage in the entire New Testament in connection with Jesus during his public ministry (*Luke 8:1–3*), and yet she is always the first to announce that Jesus has been raised. Why is this? One plausible explanation is that she too had a vision of Jesus after he died.” Mary

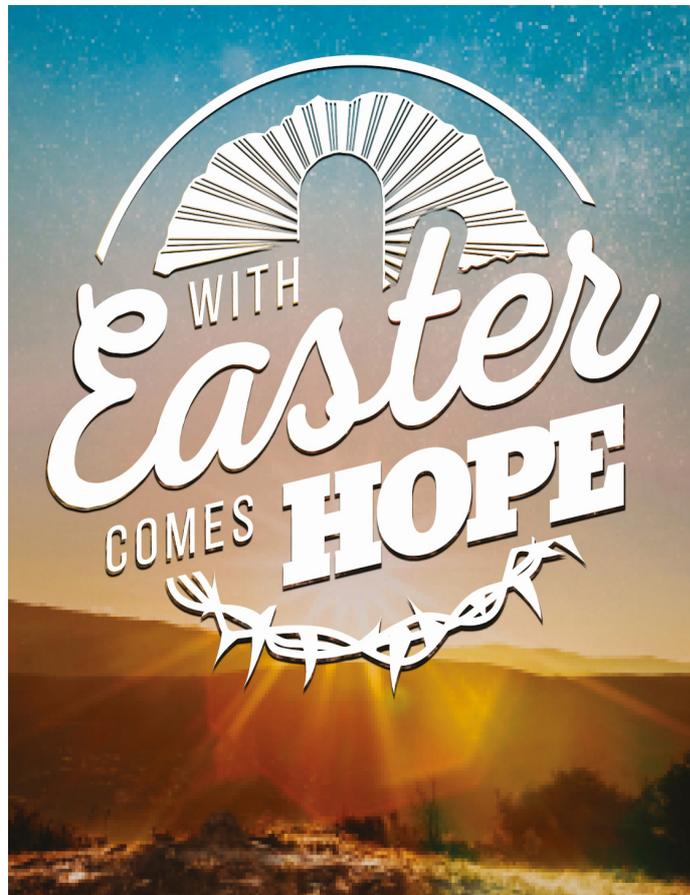
Magdalene was given the high honour of being not only the first to see the risen Jesus but the first person in history to proclaim, "I have seen the Lord!" (*John 20:18*).

Whatever these eyewitnesses saw, it transformed their lives to the point of being willing to suffer and die for it. In 2 Corinthians 11:23–33, Paul recounts his almost daily suffering for his conviction that Jesus appeared to him. He was beaten, imprisoned, stoned, starved, lost at sea, and daily in danger of all kinds of evil on his journeys throughout the Roman Empire.

We also possess strong historical evidence that certain key eyewitnesses were martyred for their faith. Peter, for instance, was crucified. James was stoned. Paul was beheaded. Whatever they saw, it was worth giving their lives for. They sealed their testimonies with their blood.

May Jesus himself appear in notable form in YOUR life, this Eastertide.

**Wishing YOU A Happy & Blessed Easter**  
**Your Friend and Vicar**  
**Canon Phillip**



# Killay Parish Magazine - 50 Years Ago, April 1971

## **Dedication of new ambulance:**

A new ambulance which will form part of a St. John Ambulance mobile first aid unit was dedicated at a special service held in St. Hilary's on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

The ambulance was donated to the West Glamorgan district by Col. M. R. Llewellyn, chairman of the St. John Council. Those who took part in the service were the Revd. Michael Walters, the Revd. W. L. Hopkin, chaplain to the brigade, who performed the dedication and the Vicar who preached the sermon. The lessons were read by Penny Bradbury and Dr. Lindsay Morgan, the District Commissioner for Wales. The service was attended by the Chief Commissioner for Wales, Lt. Col. J. R. L. Traherne, who's party from the Priory headquarters in Cardiff included the brigade secretary, Mr. C. J. Parry and Mrs. J. D. Smith. Also included as a guest of honour was the Mayor of Swansea, Ald. A. L. Reed, who together with the Chief Commissioner inspected the guard of honour made up of units from the West Glamorgan Division.

The members of the local division supervised by Superintendent George Timpson assisted in the local arrangements.

## **Church Repairs:**

It has been brought to our notice that the north east wall of the church needs attention since the Bath coping stones are beginning to disintegrate and allowing a certain amount of dampness to affect the decoration of the church. This has been inspected and it is hoped that the work will be done during the summer months. In addition the whole of the Bath stone needs cleaning and it is recommended that this be done at the same time.

*Interesting to note that fifty years later, we are currently having to tackle the same problem with other areas of Bath stone fracturing due to frost ingress. Speaking with specialist stonemasons, they will be using the same 'putty' methods to resolve the problem.*

## **Recent successes:**

The young people of Killay have been in the news recently. At a five-a-side football competition held in the Afan Lido organised by the Diocesan Youth Committee the members of our Youth Club swept the board by winning both the competitions – the cup for the under 16 years and the cup for the over 16 years. Also the local St. John Ambulance team entered a first

aid competition held in Swansea and were successful in their first attempt.

## **FROM THE REGISTERS:**

### **Holy Baptism -**

#### **14<sup>th</sup> March:**

Stephen Richard Jones, 53 Summerland Park, Upper Killay;

Lianne Rachel Flynn, 25 Gwelfor, Killay;

Joanne Emma Davies, 53 Goetre Bellaf, Duntant;

Ashley Damian Griffiths, 14 Dylan Road, Killay;

Haydn John and Matthew Iestyn Davies, 568 Gower Road, Upper Killay.

### **Holy Matrimony -**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> March:**

John David Boyes, 63 Westgate Street, Swansea and Hilary Joan Collins, 104 Gotre Fawr Road; Geoffrey Williams, 18 Goedwig Place, Gendros and Elaine Petherbridge, 44 Wimmerfield Crescent, Killay.

#### **13<sup>th</sup> March:**

Michael Peter Broadribb, 386 Westdale Lane, Mapperley and Sandra Jane Chilvers, 15 Brynaeron, Duntant.

### **Burials -**

#### **9<sup>th</sup> March:**

Stanley Hewitt, 31 Sunningdale Avenue, The Mayals.

#### **15<sup>th</sup> March:**

Alan Copp, 477, Gower Road, Killay.

#### **22<sup>nd</sup> March:**

William John Dawkins, 677, Gower Road, Upper Killay.

#### **25<sup>th</sup> March:**

Maureen Long, 34, Landor Avenue, Killay.

#### **27<sup>th</sup> March:**

Frank Gilford Lewis, 29, Fairwood Road, Duntant.

## **Maundy Thursday, time to wash feet**

Maundy Thursday is famous for two things. The first is one of the final acts that Jesus did before His death: the washing of His own disciples' feet (see John 13). Jesus washed His disciples' feet for a purpose: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another.

In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is '*mandatum novum do vobis*'. The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The ceremony of the 'washing of the feet' of members of the congregation came to be an important part of the liturgy (regular worship) of the medieval church, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

But Thursday was also important because it was on that night that Jesus first introduced the Lord's Supper, or what we nowadays call Holy Communion.

Jesus and His close friends had met in a secret upper room to share the Passover meal together - for the last time. And there Jesus transformed the Passover into the Lord's Supper, saying, 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' as He, the Lamb of God, prepared to die for the sins of the whole world. John's gospel makes it clear that the Last Supper took place the evening BEFORE the regular Passover meal, and that later Jesus died at the same time that the Passover lambs were killed.

## **Good Friday, the day the Son of God died for you**

Good Friday is the day on which Jesus died on the cross. He was crucified at 9 a.m. in the morning, and died six hours

later, at 3pm. It is the most solemn day in the Christian year, and is widely marked by the removal of all decorations from churches. In Lutheran churches, the day was marked by the reading of the passion narrative in a gospel, a practice which lies behind the 'passions' composed by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750). Both the St Matthew Passion and the St John Passion have their origins in this observance of Good Friday.

The custom of observing a period of three hours' devotion from 12 midday to 3 pm on Good Friday goes back to the 18th century. The 'Three Hours of the Cross' often take the form of an extended meditation on the 'Seven Last Words from the Cross', with periods of silence, prayer, or hymn-singing.



## One Solitary Life

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was 30, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.

He had no credentials but Himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the power of His divine manhood.

While still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying—and that was his coat.

When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend. 19 wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centre-piece of the human race ...

All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever

reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that One Solitary Life.

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*The above quote forms the entire text of a miniature book, which was hand-set and printed in 1963 by a Doris V Welsh, a former staff member of the Newberry Library in Chicago. No information about the book can be found in the essays and sermons of a James Allan Francis, to whom it is often attributed. As an anonymous work, "One Solitary Life" was published in The Irish Echo, 27<sup>th</sup> December 1969; in the Congressional Record, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1969, vol. 115; and on a variety of Christmas greeting cards in the 1970s and 1980s.*

## Easter Hope

*“So many people right across the country are anxious about employment, anxious about food, isolated from loved ones and feel that the future looks dark.”*

These are words from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s sermon on Easter Day 2020. Who would have thought that we are experiencing the same uncertainties this Easter!

Yet the Easter story remains one of hope overcoming darkness and despair. The women arrived at the tomb on Easter morning with mixed emotions, as they came to anoint Jesus’ body. *‘But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.’* (Mark 16:4). They were confused, as they tried to make

sense of Jesus’ death. Their hopes were dashed with an uncertain future. In the current pandemic, we too are left asking: *Where is God in all this?*

The young man at the tomb reminds them that God is still in control: *“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”* (Mark 16:6).

The women had forgotten Jesus’ promise to the disciples that He would die and rise from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection is also the sure foundation of hope for us in the present crisis. He turns our confusion and fear into joy and wonder! We can trust Jesus’ plan for the future of our world and lives, despite the fact that things can’t return to the way they were:

*“There needs to be a resurrection of our common life, a new normal, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful. We must dream it, build it, make it, grasp it, because it is the gift of God and the call of God.”* (Justin Welby).



### Tips from the Easter Bunny

1. There’s no such thing as too much chocolate
2. Some body parts are supposed to be floppy
3. The Easter bonnet can tame even the wildest hare
4. The grass is always greener in someone else’s basket
5. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket
6. Let happy thoughts multiply like rabbits



# Welsh Blood Service



## Where can I donate?

Next session at the Parish Centre,  
St Hilary's Church, Killay

**Thursday 22 April**

**11am - 1.30pm**

**3pm - 6.30pm**

By appointment only, to book

**Tel: 0800 25 22 66**

**[www.welsh-blood.org.uk](http://www.welsh-blood.org.uk)**

**If giving is in your blood, please help**

*If you have any news or photos you would care to share  
please contact Roger Rees*



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