

Devotional Blog

Sunday 19th April 2020

After the great build up to our major Christian festivals, the following week can often feel a bit flat. Well that's all over for another year, as the last of the Easter eggs is finally demolished and our attention then focuses on the next big event.

As the crowds dispersed, following the crucifixion of the Jesus, the Roman authorities must have been congratulating themselves on a job well done. They have got rid of the chap who was causing quite a bit of trouble! To use the famous words from the commentary of the end of the 1966 World Cup final "They think it's all over". But on this occasion, nothing could have been further from the truth. In fact, this was just the start of something that is still alive and kicking today.

"A Question of Sport" is a long running sports quiz programme and for many years there was a round that was entitled "What happened next"? A clip of a sporting event was frozen at a crucial moment and the panellists had to try and work out what happened after that point.

I wonder what answers we would come up with if the Easter story was frozen after Jesus' body was removed from the cross. I guess the most logical answer would be that we have seen the end of Jesus and His followers.

We are blessed to know "what happened next". We know from all four gospels that Jesus rose from the grave. He also appeared to His disciples on that first Easter Day. The disciples were overjoyed, once they had overcome their initial shock, to see their Master in the evening, as they were together hiding from the authorities.

In John's gospel, we are told that Thomas was not with them and despite being told "We have seen the Lord" (John20:25) by all those who were present, he did not believe them. So, a week later Jesus appeared to them again, in the same house. This time Thomas was there and he now knew what his friends had told him a week earlier was true. Jesus said to Thomas "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and have yet believed".

Many folks are saying the same today. They want proof that Jesus is alive today. We, like the disciples on that first Easter, are “witnesses” to that fact. At the end of Matthew’s gospel (28:16-20) we read that some still had doubts. But despite this Jesus said to them ” Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. (v19) He also promised to be with them always.

The commissioning that Jesus gave His first disciples is still very valid for us today. So, “what happens next” is down to each one of us!!

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