

Easter Day reflection zoom 2021 WMP

Introduction

This is a special weekend, the first Bank Holiday of the year and spread over 4 days as well!

Whether you are religious or not two things come to mind this weekend,
gardens and mysteries.....

According to Alan Titchmarsh, Easter is the beginning of the gardening year and the masses, even those people with only a window box, would normally be rushing to DIY or garden centres to begin a spring outdoor project of some kind. Indoors, the TV listings are full of new programmes promising mystery of one sort or another, whodunits, period dramas, documentaries offering edification on a range of subjects.....

Para 1

For Christians, today is the ultimate 'Holy mystery' and we tend to picture the Gospel scene with the empty tomb as some sort of garden, perhaps, because John says Mary thought Jesus was the gardener. This most wonderous mystery, the joy of the resurrection, is so awesome that we struggle to make sense of it and we will take a full 6 weeks to wrestle with it before Ascension Day and Pentecost give us even more to ponder and absorb.....

Para 2

Of course, the Holy mysteries began with creation, God bringing so many marvellous flora and fauna and ecosystems into being.

The very gift of life-human, is that not a 'holy mystery' bursting out from the Garden of Eden.....

Then there was the making of a covenant with a group of people who continually let their wayward desires get the better of them despite God's providence for their physical and spiritual needs.....

What a holy mystery it is that God's love can be so strong as to endure so much rejection and pain-as culminated in the crucifixion.....

Para 3

The very words from our Gospel gush with mystery set against a tranquil location;

There is the darkness of the morning which obscures the scene sending Mary running to Simon Peter & the other unnamed disciple.

Then there is the initial horror of finding the tomb empty, the body gone....but the tell-tale clues of the grave cloths indicating where a corpse had been though these were rearranged and had been moved out of position.....

What's more as the disciples and Mary reel from all this mystery an even greater one gently and quietly unfolds.....

Calmly, two angels question Mary, then Jesus himself repeats the same question to her 'Woman, why are you weeping?' before, by the simple use of her name, he takes away all her distress, reassures her that more mysteries are still to come and then commissions her to announce the news that he is alive.....

Para 4

For us as Christians today we may feel a sense of sorrow that whilst society around us has an almost insatiable appetite for the mysterious, it increasingly shuns the greatest mystery of all as either falsehood or irrelevance. And while many may be enjoying their gardens or outdoor spaces this weekend, the most poignant of all outdoor spaces, the empty tomb, leaves to many unmoved.

Never-the-less, we must remember that today is a day for rejoicing and celebration, it is a sign that God never gives up on humanity. Just like the Incarnation which we celebrate annually, so too Easter is a yearly renewal of God's unending promise of new life in Jesus for all who believe in him. The possibility of this encounter remains open to everyone until their final breath.

We must not be discouraged by current atheistic climate but keep faith as God has done with us and be ready to proclaim and explain our faith in the risen Jesus.

Conclusion

What are your 'holy mysteries' and your Easter garden places?

What helps you to believe in Mary's words 'I have seen the Lord!'?

Martin Luther wrote that the promise of the resurrection is to be found in 'every new leaf in springtime' not just in the scriptures. The Swiss theologian Emil Brunner considered that belief in the resurrection came from a living encounter with Jesus. Archbishop William Temple wrote (Nature, man & God) unlike other religious and philosophical systems, Christianity doesn't try to escape from the reality of life with its inherent

evil but rather the faithful are called to acknowledge the world as it really is and rejoice that its evil has been overcome through the resurrection of Jesus. The 'holy mystery' that is the joy of Easter Day is a new reality which has dawned through the empty tomb, a new triumphant, everlasting life begun with those discarded grave clothes, the darkness of the early morning gives way to the light of the risen Christ. Over the coming days and weeks may your faith be strengthened so that, like Mary, you will feel confident to testify to the resurrected Jesus. Amen.