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*t Mary*’*s Parish Church, Handsworth Eucharist, 17th April 2022, EASTER DAY*

Seeing is Believing!

*Acts 1034-43; Psalm 1181-2,14-24; 1 Corinthians 151-11; John 201-18*

*Then the other disciples, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. [John 208]*

To say ***I believe in the resurrection*** takes faith. Yet, it is this core belief that seals our faith in the God who became man in Jesus; who died on the cross to pay the price for our sins ;and promises us forgiveness and new life. If a God promises these things and cannot conquer death and doesn’t defeat death, he is not to be depended upon.

Every time I read the stories something new seems to jump out from the text. This year it was the phrase in the Gospel account, ***Then the other disciples, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed***. John believed before he saw the evidence of Jesus resurrection: the empty tomb was enough for him.

I hinted at this in my Easter Sermon in 2019 but want to revisit it for today. The most convincing evidence of the resurrection of Jesus (without being a witness of it ourselves) is the simple fact that 10 out 12 Apostles were martyred because this was the single fact on which they based their faith, the fact of the resurrection that they had witnessed and the reality of the Risen Christ with whom they spent time, shared food and from whom they received their commission to Baptise those who share that faith.

If we were together and agreed that we would tell a lie that we would share and then one of us was taken away and executed because we maintained that lie, human nature would be reluctant to keep that lie going. When a second person from the group was then executed for that same lie, the chance of any of maintaining that lie would be very slim indeed – yet the proclamation of resurrection has been proclaimed with the conviction of a Ukrainian soldier defending their homeland.

The resurrection makes life worthwhile and death is, for Christians, a sharing in Christs’ victory over death itself. That is what we celebrate today and proclaim, whatever the cost.