



# The surprise of a lifetime

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 and John 20:1-18

**H**aving seen Jesus' body placed in the tomb, Mary Magdalene and the other followers of Jesus can see only darkness ahead. All their hopes are dashed, and their grieving is all the more bitter because of the expectations they had about Jesus' purpose on earth. All that remains is to ensure that his body is properly looked after. But when they arrive the tomb is empty. Their exhausted, wrung-out hearts must have sunk, to think this was yet another, unwelcome twist in the tale.

Of course we know that in the days to come surprise will be heaped upon surprise, as we journey with the disciples and the resurrected Christ appears to them, and as we witness his ascension to

heaven and the world-shaking events of Pentecost.

Even though we may know the story well, possibly even word for word, we should expect the unexpected from the God who surprised the disciples all those years ago, and who continues to do astonishing and amazing things, if we admit the possibility of being astonished and amazed.

The psalmist today sings for joyful surprise at God's triumph over death: "I shall not die, but I shall live... he did not give me over to death." As people renewed by God's action through Jesus this Easter Day, we are invited to add our voices to that of the psalmist, to join him in singing: "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." 🌞

God of surprises, keep us alive to your astonishing actions in this world. Teach us how to spread the joyful news of the miracles you have performed, to the work you are doing today, and to the amazing things you will do tomorrow. Amen.

## Stations of the resurrection

The resurrection

by Richard Greatrex

When Jesus died the veil of the Temple was torn in two, the partition between humanity and divinity was ripped apart. Had that not already happened, though, when Jesus was born, breaking through the fleshly barrier of the womb? The Word pitching his tent among us – the nomadic God of Moses, whose lodging was the peripatetic Ark of the Covenant – was making footprints on the sand. The Temple had outlived its

purpose; and now these new walls loomed impenetrably – smaller, tighter, far more claustrophobic.

Solomon wondered as he dedicated the first Temple: "will God indeed dwell on the earth? Even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, much less this house that I have built!" Up until his death Jesus' disciples had been slowly, falteringly, reaching the conclusion that God was truly inhabiting the earth. Now the tomb was going to bear witness that God could not, cannot, be contained. 🌞



From Stations of the Resurrection: from Easter to Pentecost.  
Code: 1841 Price: £12.95  
ISBN: 9780852315453

## International Day of Human Space Flight

by Lisa Tulfer

Today is the International Day of Human Space Flight. It celebrates the anniversary of the first human space flight by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin in 1961. In fact the "space parties" happening all over the world are called "Yuri's Night". It also celebrates Valentina Tereshkova (the first woman in space), Alexei Leonov (who

performed the first spacewalk), the crew of Apollo 11 (who first landed on the moon), and nearly six hundred people who have travelled into space.

It is also a time to remember all those engineers and technicians who work behind the scenes to make the high-profile space missions possible, and the scientists who study the data they gather. While the "space race" between the USA and the USSR was built on rivalry between political powers and worldviews, we can unite in celebrating human achievement, and the understanding that space travel has given us of aspects of God's marvellous creation. 🌞

“ Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness and weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness.

Floyd W Tomkins (1850-1932), US Episcopal deacon