

## Easter 2 St Georges Day New Beginnings : A New Age

Alleluia! Christ is Risen... He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

What year are we living in... Not a catch question!

Why 2017 and not 4521 or 37?

The events we celebrated last weekend marked the start of a new era, a new age.

A new beginning in terms of world history.

What did this turning point, this new era mean for Mary and the women who went to the tomb? for Thomas, for Peter? What does it mean for us?

Mary and the **disciples...**

We heard last week how Mary and the women went to the tomb, expecting Jesus body to still be there. Instead they found the empty tomb and then saw Jesus in the garden.

Something totally awesome, unfathomable had happened.

God had raised Jesus up, freeing Him from death!

In Matthews account we read that Jesus told them to go and tell the men to go to Galilee where they would see Jesus.

The disciples were not to guard an empty tomb but to follow the risen Christ (Repeat)

In Johns account we can read that Jesus told Mary not to hold on to Him. Sometimes we want to cling on to the old, the familiar because it is just that - familiar.

But this was a new beginning, a new age for Mary and the disciples. They could touch the risen Christ, just like Thomas was able to do. But not hold on to Him.

Jesus told Thomas not to doubt but to believe.

Believe what? That the man standing before them is Jesus - the Risen Christ, the Messiah, their Risen Lord!

He said to those locked in the house, in fear, Peace be with you! Twice!

This was a new beginning, a new age for Mary and Thomas and the disciples including Peter.

Peter

Good old Peter. Remember the things we read about him last week... how he denied know Jesus 3 times before the cock crowed. How he tried to hide. How he was afraid. All totally understandable. But know, just a few weeks later Peter is a changed man. Instead of hiding amongst the crowd, denying that he knew Jesus, He stands, with the eleven, with a raised voice, and addresses the crowd.

The people he has been afraid of, he now speaks to with confidence and commitment and authority.

He told them about the resurrected Christ. How God had raised Him from death because it was impossible for him to be held in its power

Having been afraid to be seen as a witness to Jesus and all that He had done, Peter was now being a witness to His resurrection.

It was a new beginning for Peter. An new age.

He was no longer in hiding and afraid. He was a loud and public witness to what had happened. To the power and life of God in Christ Jesus.

And then Peter went on to write letters to the new church. And these opening words in 1 Peter that we have heard this morning are incredible.... and potentially life changing

By God's great mercy (love, compassion)

He has given us a new birth (story of Nicodemus) into a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

and into an inheritance that is imperishable (immortal), undefiled (pure & faults) and unfading kept in heaven for you

who are being protected by the power of God through faith

for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

Not bad words for a man who had been afraid to admit he even knew Jesus!

Peter wrote these words to the new church. And we read them today, over 2000 years later.

What does this 'new era' mean for us?

How do these words affect us? What do they mean to us?

Us

Who has ever inherited something from someone? To be an heir is to be in receipt of something - usually considered precious.

When my gran died I inherited a small sum of money and with it bought the picture that you may have seen in my lounge above the fire. I saw it and loved it and bought it as a reminder of my gran

It is precious and I treasure it greatly.

Peter tells us in his letter that we have been given a new birth into a living hope and an inheritance

The resurrection of Jesus means we can be recipient of something precious

Something that will NEVER perish or fade or be messed up

It is an inheritance	given	by divine mercy
	made possible	through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
	secured	in heaven
	best received	as a gift
	best known	through a life of genuine faith

What is genuine faith?

tested... challenged... refined...

resulting in praise and worship

We do have struggles

We do have challenges

We do suffer at times

Being a Christian is not an insurance policy

So how do we live in this paradox?

BUT we have a living hope, an inheritance that is waiting for our collection in heaven

Now but not yet

And look at the end of the reading... believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy

Why? Because Jesus death & resurrection has secured for us a new birth, a living hope, an imperishable inheritance of salvation

The events we celebrated last week mark a new beginning, a new age for us

We are not left to guard an empty tomb but follow a risen Christ.