

Nursing Times

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Easter Revelation

As another Easter day draws near, the Christian Church waits to celebrate the greatest event in history: the resurrection from the dead of a man professing to be the Son of God.

No disciples of any religion could have been so disappointed that early morning nearly 2,000 years ago as a small band of women wending their way to the tomb to embalm the body of Christ and pay their last respects. Although most of the disciples who followed Christ in his life were men, they had fled at the trial or stood afar off at the execution, while the women ministered to him during his last earthly hours. In every hospital ward there is a re-enactment of this scene round the beds of patients, those who are in desperate need requiring of the nurse something more than advanced medicine, surgery and physical skill.

What a change of emotion there was as the women saw that the stone had been rolled away. Before they could even think of what this could mean they heard those most remarkable words, 'He is not here: for he is risen... Come, see...' An empty tomb, folded grave clothes, the very atmosphere charged with divine power. The disciples' forgotten dream had become true, and they remembered that he said he would be put to death and after three days would rise again from the dead.

What to me is so extraordinary is that Christ only showed himself to those who needed him. It would have been so easy to have shown himself to his executioners, to his false accusers, to those that spat upon him, to those who disbelieved.

Many hundreds of thousands of believers could have

been made that day, but they would have been made disciples by fear and not by faith. Instead, he shows himself to the sorrowing Peter, the disciple who had failed Christ so completely when he was needed most. It was recorded that the disciples at the tomb were told to tell Christ's disciples—and Peter. The first name Christ used after his resurrection was Peter, and it changed the disciple's life. Another, a woman named Mary who greatly loved her Lord, asked Christ (supposing him to be the gardener) where was the body of her Lord. He answered 'Mary,' and immediately there was recognition.

On the road to Emmaus, two disciples met with the resurrected Christ and as he revealed himself to them it was said that their heart burned within them. Doubting Thomas was changed into a worshipping saint. The Gospel of St. John, more than all the others, reveals Christ as the one who met individuals: the woman at the well, the cripple at the pool, the couple at the wedding feast, the woman caught in sin.

So the bells ring out over fields and streets bursting with the evidence of the fullness of spring, calling people to worship the risen Christ and to celebrate together the wonder of the empty tomb. They send forth to all Christians the Easter message of divine new life to give them power to live a life of calm amid the rush and bustle, and strength of purpose in the hour of indecision.

Perhaps as we bow the head in prayer this Easter Day we also will know the personal touch of the Saviour who left an empty tomb to show himself to those who live by faith.

ANTHONY J. CARR