

## PALM SUNDAY 2018

I may have mentioned this before but let me share a secret with you this morning.

I have had a long-standing love affair with the voice of the late, great Miss Peggy Lee, the platinum-haired jazz chanteuse, whose smoky vocals draws me into her consummate story telling. Peggy not only sang wonderfully but composed songs both affecting and funny – include the Siamese cat song in the Disney classic, *The Lady and the Tramp!*

However, a few years a teacher colleague told me about a Peggy Lee song that she had heard played at a friend's funeral. I confess that I was shocked when I listened to it. *'Is that all there is?'* is perhaps the bleakest song I know. Written by Jerry Lieberman and Mike Stoller in the 1960s, it charts the passage of the life of a woman who sees everything within her life as pointless. A house fire from which she is saved as a child when the whole world seems ablaze, a visit to the circus billed as the greatest show on Earth, falling in love and out of it..... all is meaningless.

*I know what you must be saying to yourselves  
If that's the way she feels about it  
Then why doesn't she just end it all  
Oh no. not me. I'm not ready for the final disappointment  
'Cause I know just as well as I'm standing here talking to you  
That when that final moment comes  
And I'm breathing my last breath  
I know what I'll be saying to myself.  
" Is that all there is? "*

*Is that all there is?  
If that's all there is, my friends, then let's keep dancing  
Let's break out the booze and have a ball  
If that's all there is.*

The Liturgy of Palm Sunday is an extraordinary walk with the Lord. We have raised our palm crosses and the cries of Hosanna have filled the air. This morning, Holy Trinity, Cuckfield has been the gateway into the Holy City where we have welcomed the Messiah- the Anointed One.

We have heard the Passion according to Mark. In his vivid account, Mark has led us on a journey through last hours of the Lord's life. We have been bystanders at his arrest and trial. We have stood by as Peter has denied Jesus. Holy Trinity, Cuckfield has been the scene both of the Via Dolorosa and Calvary.

Imagine, if you will, the sound of the cross falling into its socket as the soldiers have hoisting it up. The Lord is nailed high above our heads. His death words and the death throes of three men have echoed in our ears. God made Man has died, and the soldier has said in our hearing, 'Truly this man was God's Son.'

**'Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock.'**

Is that all there is?

Is the question posed in Peggy Lee's song also the answer? *Is that all there is?*

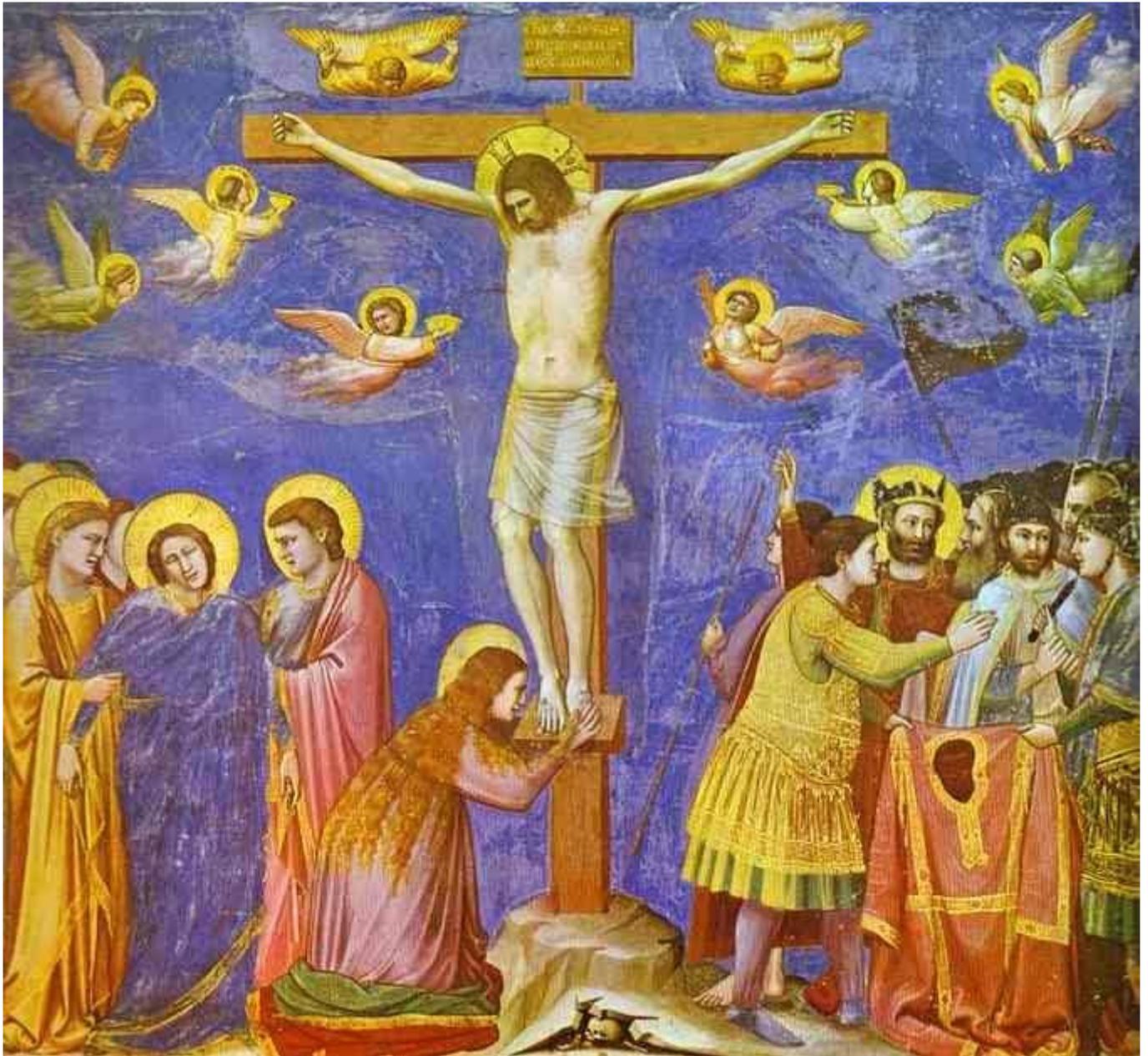
My dear friends, the emphatic answer, the creation-and-earth-shattering answer to this question is **NO** - that's not all there is.

For a thousand years, the Christian community of Cuckfield and their clergy have walked the way of the Cross on this very spot, and in every age they have proclaimed that that is **not** all there is. Because the desolation of Christ's death is transformed by the overwhelming love of God for each one of us revealed through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

At the start of this Holy Week, I urge you to take time to travel with the Lord. Travel with him, if you can, to the Upper Room. Travel with him to Calvary and then to the Empty Tomb. Be part of the Light of Christ and seek to know more deeply the great love that Jesus bears for you. He loves **you** SO MUCH that he undergoes all of this for **you**. His Passion is for **you** and so too is his Resurrection. Travel well.

*Collect*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who in your tender love towards the human race  
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
to take upon him our flesh  
and to suffer death upon the cross:  
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,  
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Giotto di Bondone - Scrovegni Chapel, Padua.

*Post Communion*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,  
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:  
give us the mind to follow you  
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Isaiah 50:4-9a**

<sup>4</sup>The Lord God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,<sup>[a]</sup>  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he wakens—

wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.  
5 The Lord God has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backwards.  
6 I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.  
7 The Lord God helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
8 he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
9 It is the Lord God who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

### **Philippians 2:5-11**

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
6 who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
7 but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
8 he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.  
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
10 so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

### **Mark 14-15**

#### **The Plot to Kill Jesus**

14 It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> by stealth and kill him; <sup>2</sup> for they said, 'Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.'

#### **The Anointing at Bethany**

<sup>3</sup> While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,<sup>[b]</sup> as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. <sup>4</sup> But some were there who said to one another in anger, 'Why was the ointment wasted in this way? <sup>5</sup> For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii,<sup>[c]</sup> and the money given to the poor.' And they scolded her. <sup>6</sup> But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. <sup>7</sup> For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup> She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. <sup>9</sup> Truly I tell you, wherever the good news<sup>[d]</sup> is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

### **Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus**

<sup>10</sup> Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. <sup>11</sup> When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

### **The Passover with the Disciples**

<sup>12</sup> On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' <sup>13</sup> So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, <sup>14</sup> and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' <sup>15</sup> He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' <sup>16</sup> So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>17</sup> When it was evening, he came with the twelve. <sup>18</sup> And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' <sup>19</sup> They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, 'Surely, not I?' <sup>20</sup> He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread<sup>[e]</sup> into the bowl<sup>[f]</sup> with me. <sup>21</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.'

### **The Institution of the Lord's Supper**

<sup>22</sup> While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' <sup>23</sup> Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. <sup>24</sup> He said to them, 'This is my blood of the<sup>[g]</sup> covenant, which is poured out for many. <sup>25</sup> Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

### **Peter's Denial Foretold**

<sup>26</sup> When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>27</sup> And Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."

<sup>28</sup> But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.' <sup>29</sup> Peter said to him, 'Even though all become deserters, I will not.' <sup>30</sup> Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.' <sup>31</sup> But he said vehemently, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And all of them said the same.

### **Jesus Prays in Gethsemane**

<sup>32</sup> They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' <sup>33</sup> He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. <sup>34</sup> And he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.' <sup>35</sup> And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. <sup>36</sup> He said, 'Abba,<sup>[h]</sup> Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet,

not what I want, but what you want.’<sup>37</sup> He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour?’<sup>38</sup> Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;<sup>[i]</sup> the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’<sup>39</sup> And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.<sup>40</sup> And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.<sup>41</sup> He came a third time and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.’<sup>42</sup> Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.’

### **The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus**

<sup>43</sup> Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.<sup>44</sup> Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, ‘The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.’<sup>45</sup> So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, ‘Rabbi!’ and kissed him.<sup>46</sup> Then they laid hands on him and arrested him.<sup>47</sup> But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear.<sup>48</sup> Then Jesus said to them, ‘Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit?’<sup>49</sup> Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.’<sup>50</sup> All of them deserted him and fled.

<sup>51</sup> A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him,<sup>52</sup> but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

### **Jesus before the Council**

<sup>53</sup> They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled.<sup>54</sup> Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.<sup>55</sup> Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none.<sup>56</sup> For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree.<sup>57</sup> Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying,<sup>58</sup> ‘We heard him say, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.”’<sup>59</sup> But even on this point their testimony did not agree.<sup>60</sup> Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, ‘Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?’<sup>61</sup> But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Messiah,<sup>[i]</sup> the Son of the Blessed One?’

<sup>62</sup> Jesus said, ‘I am; and

“you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power”, and “coming with the clouds of heaven.”’

<sup>63</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘Why do we still need witnesses?’<sup>64</sup> You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?’ All of them condemned him as deserving death.<sup>65</sup> Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, ‘Prophecy!’ The guards also took him over and beat him.

### **Peter Denies Jesus**

<sup>66</sup> While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by.

<sup>67</sup> When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.’<sup>68</sup> But he denied it, saying, ‘I do not know or understand what you are talking about.’ And he went out into the forecourt.<sup>[k]</sup> Then the cock crowed.<sup>[i]</sup><sup>69</sup> And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, ‘This man is one of them.’<sup>70</sup> But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, ‘Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.’<sup>71</sup> But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, ‘I do not know this man you are talking about.’<sup>72</sup> At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.’ And he broke down and wept.

## **Jesus before Pilate**

15 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. <sup>2</sup> Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' <sup>3</sup> Then the chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup> Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' <sup>5</sup> But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

## **Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified**

<sup>6</sup> Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. <sup>7</sup> Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. <sup>8</sup> So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. <sup>9</sup> Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' <sup>10</sup> For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. <sup>11</sup> But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. <sup>12</sup> Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do<sup>[m]</sup> with the man you call<sup>[n]</sup> the King of the Jews?' <sup>13</sup> They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' <sup>14</sup> Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' <sup>15</sup> So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

## **The Soldiers Mock Jesus**

<sup>16</sup> Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters<sup>[o]</sup>); and they called together the whole cohort. <sup>17</sup> And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. <sup>18</sup> And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' <sup>19</sup> They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. <sup>20</sup> After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

## **The Crucifixion of Jesus**

<sup>21</sup> They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. <sup>22</sup> Then they brought Jesus<sup>[p]</sup> to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). <sup>23</sup> And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup> And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

<sup>25</sup> It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup> The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' <sup>27</sup> And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.<sup>[q]</sup> <sup>29</sup> Those who passed by derided<sup>[r]</sup> him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, <sup>30</sup> save yourself, and come down from the cross!' <sup>31</sup> In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. <sup>32</sup> Let the Messiah,<sup>[s]</sup> the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

## **The Death of Jesus**

<sup>33</sup> When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land<sup>[t]</sup> until three in the afternoon. <sup>34</sup> At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'<sup>[u]</sup> <sup>35</sup> When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' <sup>36</sup> And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' <sup>37</sup> Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38</sup> And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. <sup>39</sup> Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he<sup>[v]</sup> breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'<sup>[w]</sup>

<sup>40</sup> There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. <sup>41</sup> These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up

with him to Jerusalem.

### **The Burial of Jesus**

<sup>42</sup> When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, <sup>43</sup> Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup> Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. <sup>45</sup> When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. <sup>46</sup> Then Joseph<sup>[x]</sup> bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body,<sup>[y]</sup> wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. <sup>47</sup> Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where the body was laid.