

## Easter Sunday 2015 – ST MARY’S VERSION

**Intro:** check who has received (x) Easter eggs.... and who has eaten any yet?

Godfrey bursts in: Oh good morning, I didn't realise anyone would be here. I am on a break from work – you wouldn't believe how many carrots I have chopped this morning I know they talk about the Easter bunny – I think we will be feeding bunnies only at lunch today! Oh sorry am I interrupting – just carry on as if I am not here.

Matt I am sure we have met before. It's Godfrey isn't it.

Godfrey Yes, GodFree Lylovesus.

Matt continues with egg stuff – but Godfrey keeps making noise and wondering.

Matt Maybe we could help with your treasure hunt...

**GODFREY:** It's actually called geocaching, it's a form of treasure hunting and a new cache was registered for your church this morning – I think I might be the first and I want to get the treasure.

Basically I use this device which brought me here and helps to get me within 10m of the prize or cache. It says it is a micro hunt so we are looking for something the size of a cream egg. There is usually a special prize, I have bought some swaps (marbles/spinner)!

It's a big building though isn't it? But I have got some clues to narrow down the area to search in. Now I'm not great at the cryptic ones, so would you mind helping me, you look like an enthusiastic and kind group of people.

I've got 5 clues – and the first letter of each clue spells a word, so here goes – most of them are Easter-themed:

- The disciple who doubted Jesus had come back to life THOMAS (T)
- The colour of Palm Sunday and the Passion RED (R)
- The half of the bible that tells us about Jesus' life and also the church NEW (N)
- The name of the Mount where Jesus went after the last supper OLIVES (O)
- The place where you wet the baby's head – but not a pub! FONT (F)

Get kids to hold up one letter each (as you answer the clue) and scramble them around spelling silly words before asking for help to unscramble

Now we need to unscramble the letters (FRONT)

GODFREY STARTS LOOKING – I'm getting warmer, I might even be the first to find it.

So the additional hint is a RIDDLE: In the garden / at sunrise / it is empty / there's the prize!

Where do you think it is? (ASK) GOES TO TOMB IN EASTER GARDEN AND FINDS CANISTER, OPENS IT

What!! It's empty! There's nothing in it. It's a geocache with no cache! A treasure hunt with no treasure. No prize at all. How disappointing. And I'd come all this way.... (Godfrey sits on step)

**TALK:** Poor old Godfrey – so disappointing for him. Or is it?

Sometimes things aren't always as they seem:

- Imagine the people celebrating Jesus' arrival on Palm Sunday, thinking him to be the leader who would defeat the Romans – and then watching him go to the temple and not the army barracks instead
- Imagine the disciples on Good Friday watching Jesus die – that wasn't the plan! He was meant to be the king who saved them and here he was, his life ending.
- Imagine being the women going to the tomb, expecting to care for a dead body and finding it empty! As our bible reading says, they were terrified! The celebrations come later. Things aren't always what they seem....

But it's just as well, isn't it?

The crowds on Palm Sunday got their army 40 years later and all it achieved was a terrible siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. Jesus was the real king they *needed* after all, just not the one they expected.

The disciples thought they were seeing a defeat on Good Friday – and in fact they were watching a great victory. When Jesus died he didn't lose to death: he conquered it. He wasn't overcome by humanity's evil – he found a way to deal with it. The great defeat was in fact the great victory!

And when the women found the tomb empty, Jesus hadn't just disappeared, or run away or had his body stolen – he was alive! The angel at the tomb knew it: "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him."

It's not what it seems – it's better! Much, much better. Jesus is alive.

And today we come to celebrate that fact that things didn't turn out as we expected.

- If Jesus *had* taken on the Romans, there would be no Easter and none of us would be here.
- If Jesus had taken a way out from the trial and the cross, there would be no Easter and none of us would be here.
- If Jesus' body was still in the tomb there would be no Easter and none of us would be here.

But we *are* here, we *can* celebrate, we still give schools and workers a holiday 2,000 years later because at Easter Jesus broke the power of sin and death, he made a way for us to be forgiven, for the stuff in our lives to be made whole, for us to become God's adopted children, part of his family.

Today we give thanks that things didn't turn out as they seemed. And Godfrey you might feel sad that there was no treasure, but the treasure that can never be taken away is that Jesus loves you, and he's alive and walks with you your whole life if you ask him to. The fact that the canister was empty reminds us that the tomb is empty and Jesus is alive.

And today we want to say thank you Jesus. Thank you that you died for us, and thank you that you rose again. Thank you that this is the best news in the world, news we can still celebrate 2,000 years later. News that we'll celebrate for all eternity. Thank you Jesus: we're so glad things aren't always what they seem!

Godfrey: Well I had better be getting back to work. Nice to meet you all.

Amelie or Isaac: It isn't exactly treasure Godfrey but have a shiny egg to remind you of the greatest treasure: God's love and that Jesus is Alive.

PRAY