

The Garden

Garden of Eden (Genesis 1&2)

Gethsemane (Matt26, Mark14, Luke 22, John 18)

Garden of the Tomb (John 19 &20)

Heavenly Garden (Rev 22)

Looking from Space any garden is but a pinprick in the whole of creation and yet can carry significance and meaning for our lives. We think of biblical gardens (you may like to wander through these and reflect what it is like to be in those gardens) or bring to mind gardens holding some personal life experience and memory.

Our minds might picture colour, swathes of colour, a palate to delight the eye, scent hanging in the air, the breeze rustling the grasses, the leaves underfoot and overhead drawing our attention, our awareness of the miracle of life; of growth and endless possibilities of being present in God's garden.

My Grandma was one of the first to write in my autograph book on my seventh birthday:

The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
One is nearer God's heart in a
garden
Than anywhere else on earth.



People may not be so familiar with the final verse of this poem.

*For he broke it (His heart) for us
in a garden*

Under the Olive trees

*Where the angel of strength
was the warden*

*And the soul of the world found
ease.*

Dorothy Frances Gurney



At Easter time, we may read the poem, and our minds picture another garden influenced by many a "Easter Garden" in our churches, where moss and pretty spring flowers surround an empty tomb. However, in the Middle East gardens are rare. The Arabic word for garden is 'paradise' surrounded by the desert beyond. They are places of wonder and solace in

a dry and dusty land where rain is infrequent. Central to this 'paradise' is flowing water, source of all life, shoots spring up through the dry earth, ancient trees, deeply rooted, provide shade and sanctuary. These are the biblical gardens, and it is in one such as this that a man and a woman meet through another stream of water, that of tears. It is in this pinprick of creation Jesus meets Mary Magdalene in the garden of the Resurrection.

Resurrection begins the final chapter in the divine plan. In this sacred moment of time and space, the beginning meets the end. The man and the woman in Genesis meet the end of time vision in the garden of Revelation when, in paradise, God comes down to meet his bride the Church, where the leaves of the trees provide healing for the nations for all time.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end., Here, in this garden, body and soul meet in a moment of eternity. In this is our hope and prayer. At every Eucharist as water and wine are prepared on the altar we pray, "By the mingling of this water and this wine may we come to share in the divinity of Christ as he humbled himself to share the life of our humanity. Amen"

Amen, let the new life of the Easter Garden, sorrow turning to joy and the apostolic command, "Go tell..."



be ours as we pray and work that God's purpose and healing for all time, and for all of creation is brought to completion.

You may like to listen to Karl Jobe singing, "The Garden" or spend some time each day in a place you feel the healing presence of God and share that peace and the "life giving life" with another : as Mary Sumner prayed, "O Lord. let me touch as many lives as possible for thee: and every life I touch, do thou by thy spirit quicken, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live. Every encounter an Easter moment, a garden gift.

- Hildegard de Bingen's invocation of the Holy Spirit.