

Friends

I love the gardener in the story of that first resurrection Sunday. Now, I know what you are thinking: “Vicci, there is no gardener! The gardener was Mary’s mistake. She saw Jesus and thought he was the gardener.” But let’s think about that. Mary had been spending considerable time with Jesus who often stayed with her and her brother and sister in Bethany. She knew what he looked like.

When Jesus came out of the tomb, he cannot have been wearing anything. His clothes had been divided among the soldiers and the cloak his mother had woven him was gambled for in a game of dice. The grave clothes which he had been wrapped in were left behind in the grave. Jesus must have come out of the tomb naked. Who did he meet? Well, we know there would have been a gardener around or Mary wouldn’t have assumed the gardener had taken his body. She wouldn’t have assumed that Jesus was the gardener. She would have said, “Wow, you’re a gardener. That’s unexpected!” There was a gardener, it just wasn’t the person that Mary met.

My suggestion is however, that he was the person that Jesus met. Arriving naked from the tomb, walking in the garden as the first man and woman walked in the garden of Eden, “a second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came” as the old hymn has it. Jesus met the gardener who must have said to him something like this: “Mate, you can’t wander around here like that. What are you thinking? It’s not decent!” Whatever Jesus said to him in response I don’t know, but it must surely have elicited the offer of the gardener’s spare gardening outfit. Mary mistook Jesus for the gardener because that was how he was dressed.

As I said, I love the gardener in the story of that first resurrection Sunday. If I wonder if I too would have fallen asleep on Maundy Thursday while Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, I hope that I would have offered him something to wear when he rejoiced before God in his resurrection. We rarely get to be Jesus to the people in our lives. Even when we try to reflect his light, we often get it wrong. Alas, we are all

too human! Yet perhaps on the good days, we too can be the gardener, and offer comfort and dignity to those who are coming through difficult times.

God bless, Vicci