

connecting faith and daily life

A grain of hope

Gillian Cooper *reflects on* John 20:19-end

“Doubting Thomas,” we call him, but for me Thomas is a realist. He lives his life the way I live mine. Thomas and I know that dead people do not come back to life. We might wish they would, we might imagine them with us; we might even think we see them in the street or hear their voice, but this is real life, and the dead stay dead.

And yet... the Easter story asks us to believe, with Thomas, that Jesus really did live again after death – not as a ghost, not as a figment of someone’s imagination, but as a real live person who could be touched as well as heard and seen. It goes against everything we know of the world. It is almost impossible to believe. Yet Jesus says we are “blessed” if we do. Blessed because if we can suspend for a second what we know about the rules of nature, we can perhaps wonder whether what Thomas saw might be the truth. Blessed because if we can allow for the possibility of God doing something extraordinary, if we can let our imaginations to run wild, if we consider all that Jesus said about the relationship between his life and ours, then there can be inside us a grain of hope. Because if it’s true, the dead are not lost, and nor will we be. 🙏



Losing Poppy and adopting Rosie

by Gillian Cooper

Readers might remember Gillian Cooper’s dog, Poppy, who became a familiar and much-loved feature of *Sunday Link* in Gillian’s long-running series “Walking with Poppy”. Following a short illness in 2022, Gillian had to make the heartbreaking decision to ask the vet to put Poppy to sleep. In August that year Rosie, a six-year-old cavachon, came to live with Gillian. This week and next Gillian tells us about losing Poppy, before starting a new, occasional series, “Walking with Rosie”. 🙏



Gillian with Poppy, Cooper, 5 May 2009 – 13 January 2022

“Whatever else I am dissatisfied with, there is one whom I can contemplate with utter satisfaction and bathe my stained soul in that eternal fount of purity.”

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), priest, university professor, social reformer, historian, novelist and poet

Risen Lord Jesus, we cannot touch your hands and side; we cannot always discern your presence or hear your voice. Give us faith and hope, that we may believe your promises, and know that in your death has been defeated. Amen.

Walking with Poppy

Poppy’s last walk

by Gillian Cooper

It is a perfect day, crisp and bright. Our usual walk, and Poppy can stop and sniff as much as she likes this morning. We greet friends. I do not show that my heart is breaking.

Poppy is diabetic, and the balance in her system has gone awry. She needs a hospital stay, and I know she would hate that. And Poppy has taken matters into her own paws – she has

simply stopped eating. I have offered every possible delicious food, desperate to keep her a while longer, but my stubborn little terrier is adamant. Enough is enough.

I now have to “play God”, glad at least that I only have to do something so painful on such a small scale. “Have the gates of death been revealed to you, or have you seen the gates of deep darkness?” God asks Job. Today I feel I understand a little more of God’s awesome responsibility for the world. 🙏