

+WEEKLY SERMON

communicate@blackburn.anglican.org



Mary visited the tomb

All of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John make mention of Mary and another woman visiting Jesus' tomb after the Sabbath Day. They were going to anoint His body with ointment.

The Gospels don't all record the details of Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial in the same way. Just as the witnesses to any incident/event don't all remember the same facts. People see and remember different things even though they were at the same event; I saw this at almost every crime enquiry I attended as a police officer.

With all four Gospel writers recording the women's visit we must then assume that respect for the dead was a priority.

I recently visited the small Jewish cemetery in Layton, Blackpool. It is now a closed plot and is the size of a large garden. Many of those buried there would have come as refugees from the anti-Jewish pogroms in Eastern Europe in the early 1900s.

It's overgrown and the building which used to say Kaddish (the prayer for the dead) is covered in ivy. The graves are untended and there is litter and some vandalism.

I was visiting a project helping modern day refugees at the time of the trip to Blackpool. They are all Muslims and have come here for safety as did the Blackpool Jews.

At this time when the war in the Holy Land continues, would the cleaning and care of this small cemetery be a sign of reconciliation when a team of Muslims and Christians join together to respect the dead, as Mary did two thousand years ago.

Who will join me? An afternoon of cleaning and caring – removing rubbish and ivy.

Contact: andrewpratt1@btinternet.com (07971 733971).

Canon Andrew R Pratt MBE, Interfaith Advisor to the Bishop of Blackburn

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES