

THE Easter Story

Anita Ganeri

Illustrated by
Rachael Phillips

232
96
7

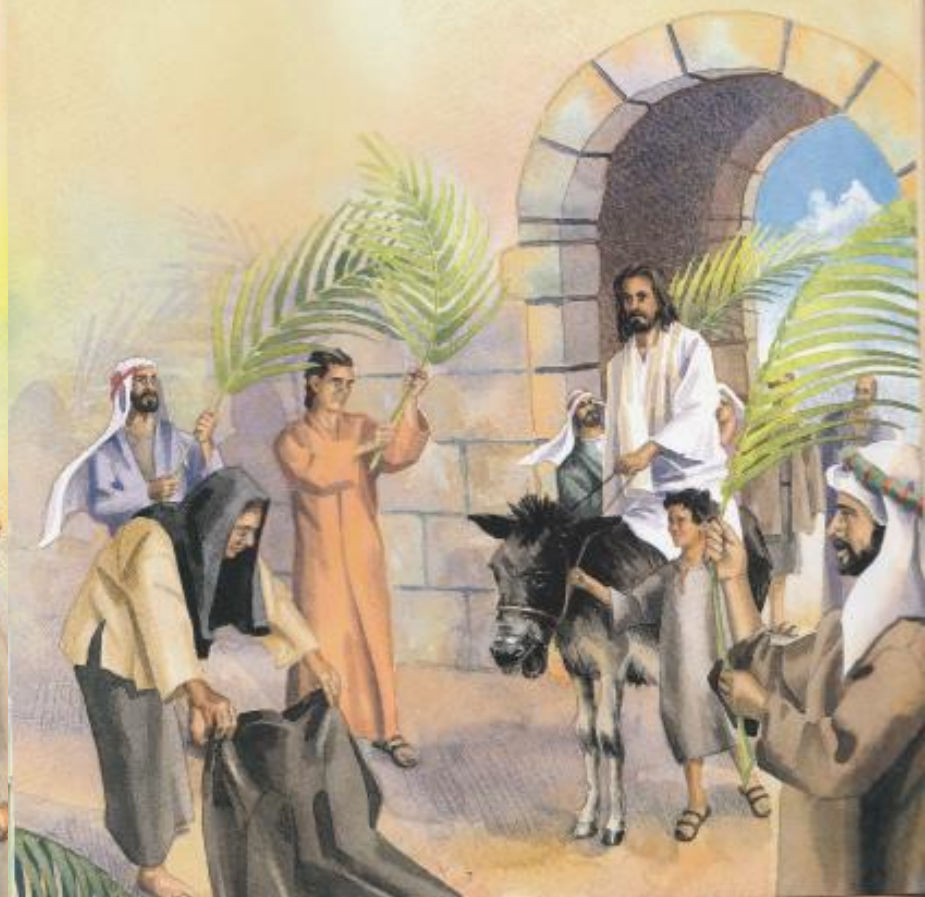
At the time of the festival of Passover, Jesus travelled to Jerusalem with his disciples. He knew that his life was in danger, for there were many religious priests and leaders in Jerusalem who did not like what he taught. They saw him as a threat to their power and authority. But the ordinary people of the city flocked to see him.

As Jesus rode into the city on the back of a donkey, crowds of people lined the street to greet him. Some spread their cloaks on the ground in front of him. Others waved long branches of palm leaves.



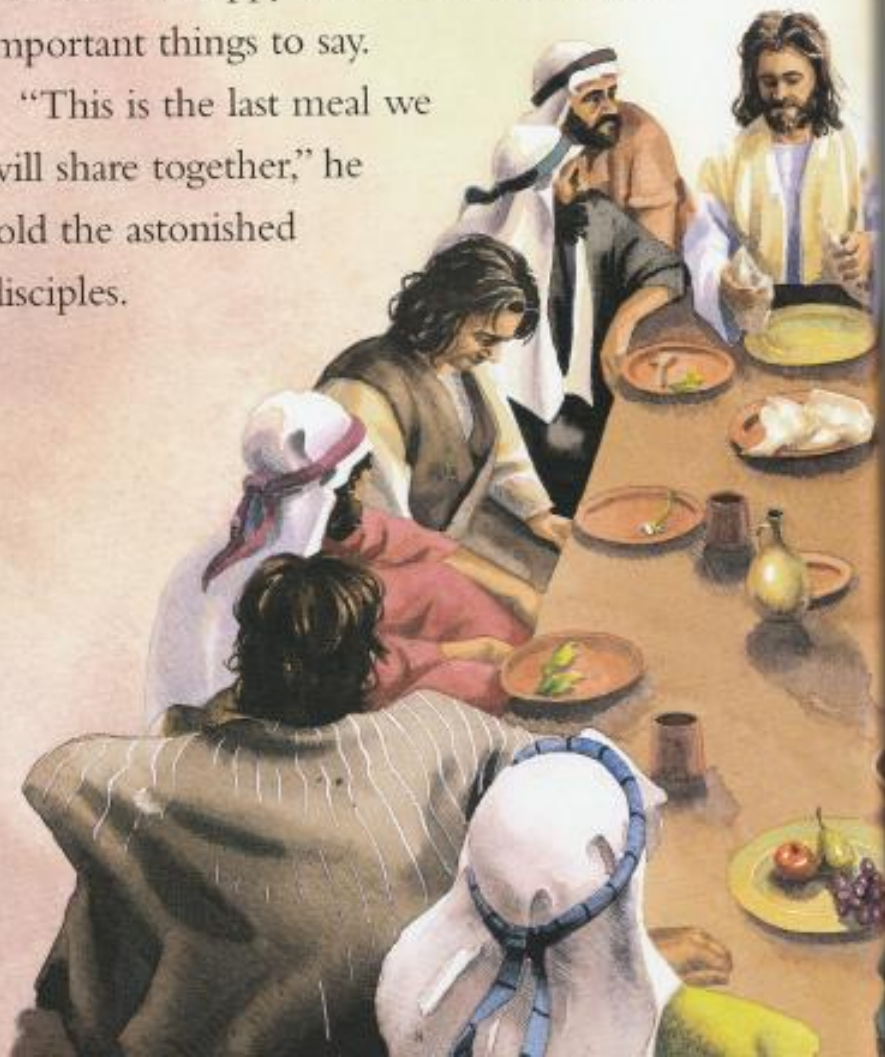
“Hosanna in the highest,” they shouted.
“Blessed is he that comes in the name
of the Lord.”

It was a welcome fit for any king.



A few days later, Jesus sat down with his disciples to share a Passover feast. It should have been a happy occasion but Jesus had important things to say.

“This is the last meal we will share together,” he told the astonished disciples.

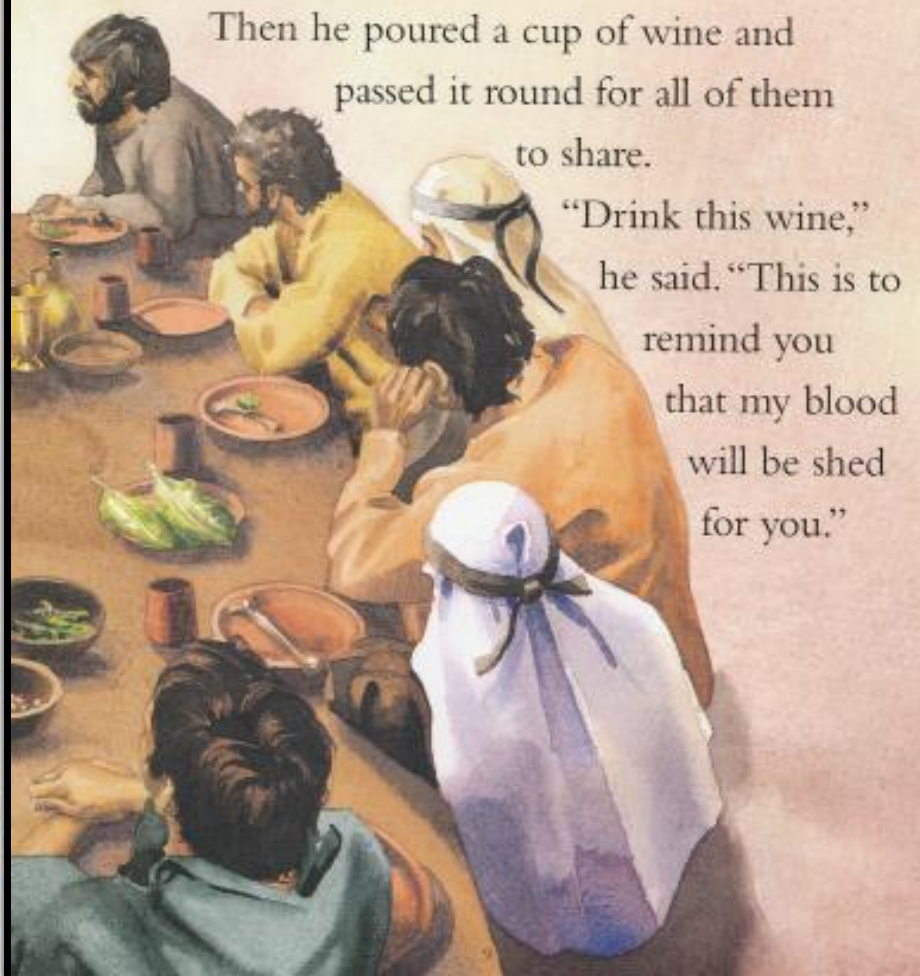


Then he picked up some bread, blessed it and broke it into pieces.

“Eat this bread,” he said. “This is to remind you of me.”

Then he poured a cup of wine and passed it round for all of them to share.

“Drink this wine,” he said. “This is to remind you that my blood will be shed for you.”



The disciples did what Jesus asked. But they did not understand why Jesus had said that this would be their last meal together. Then Jesus said, "One of you sitting here will betray me."

The disciples were stunned. They could not believe their ears. They loved Jesus very much. Why would any of them want to betray him?

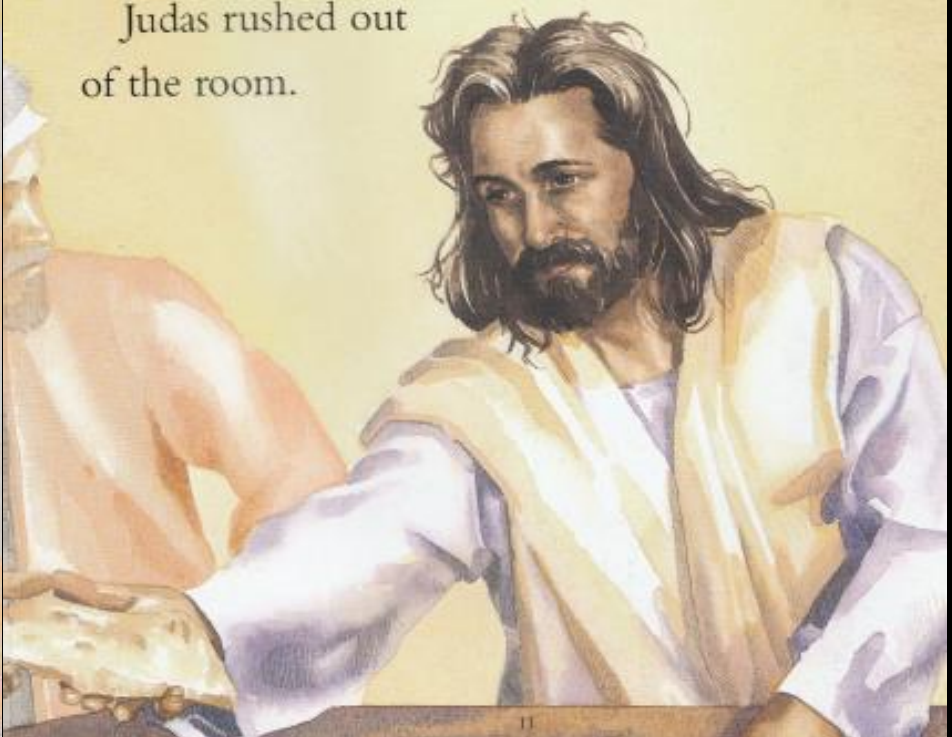


Quietly, Simon Peter asked, "Lord, who will it be?"

Jesus did not reply, but he took a piece of bread and dipped it in some wine. Then he handed it to Judas and said, "Go and do what you have to do."

For Jesus knew that his enemies had offered Judas thirty pieces of silver to betray his master.

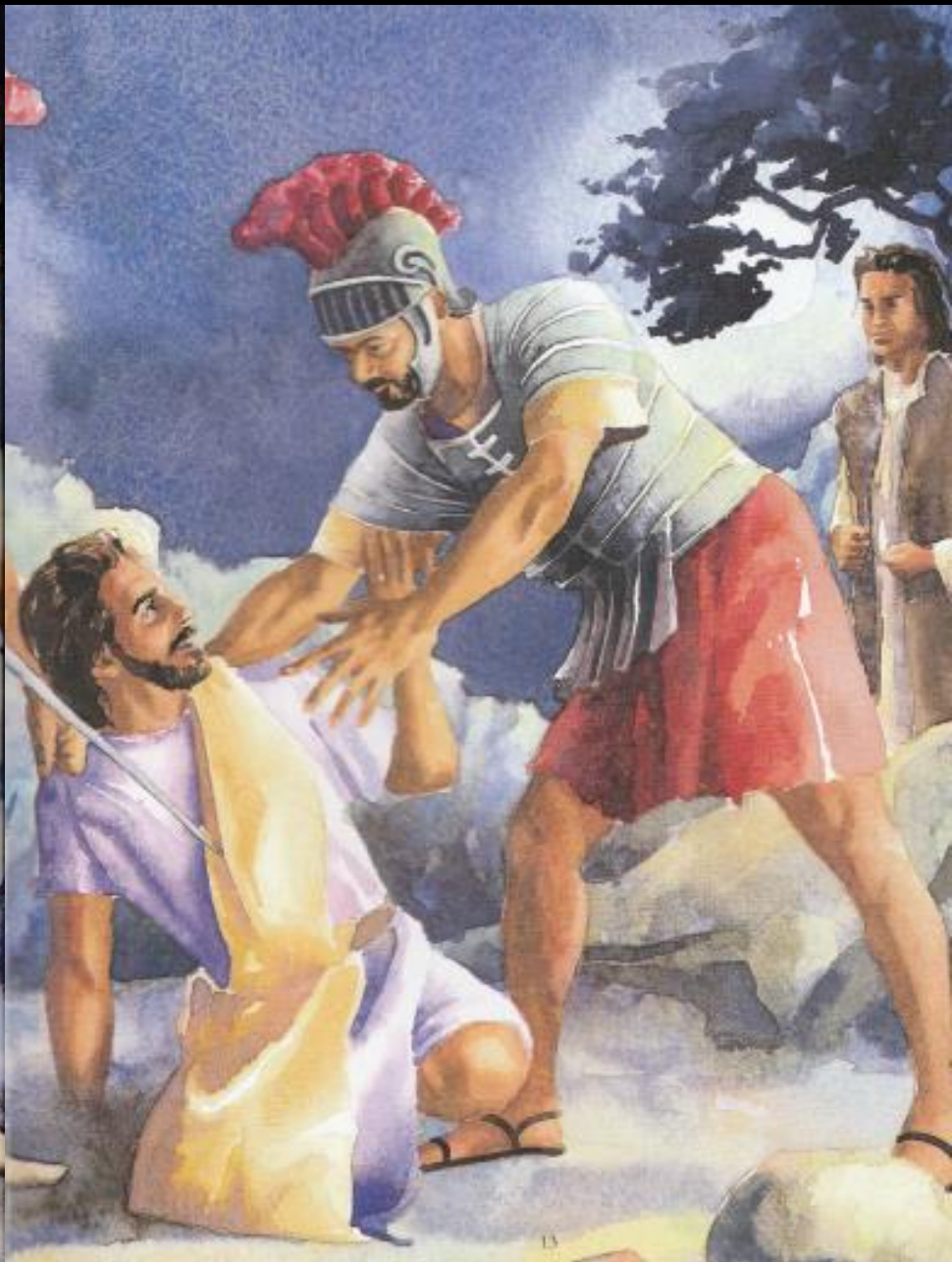
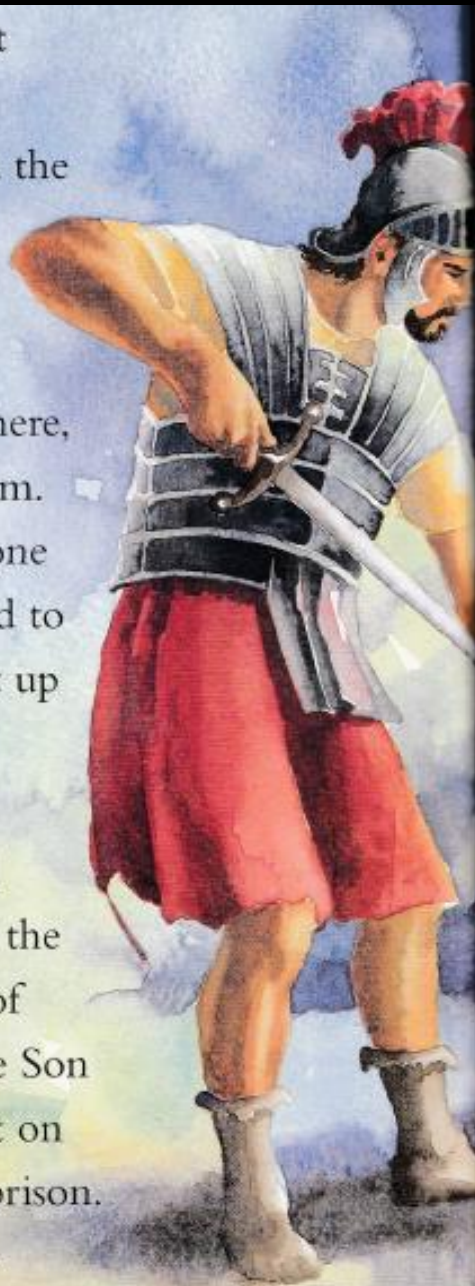
Judas rushed out of the room.

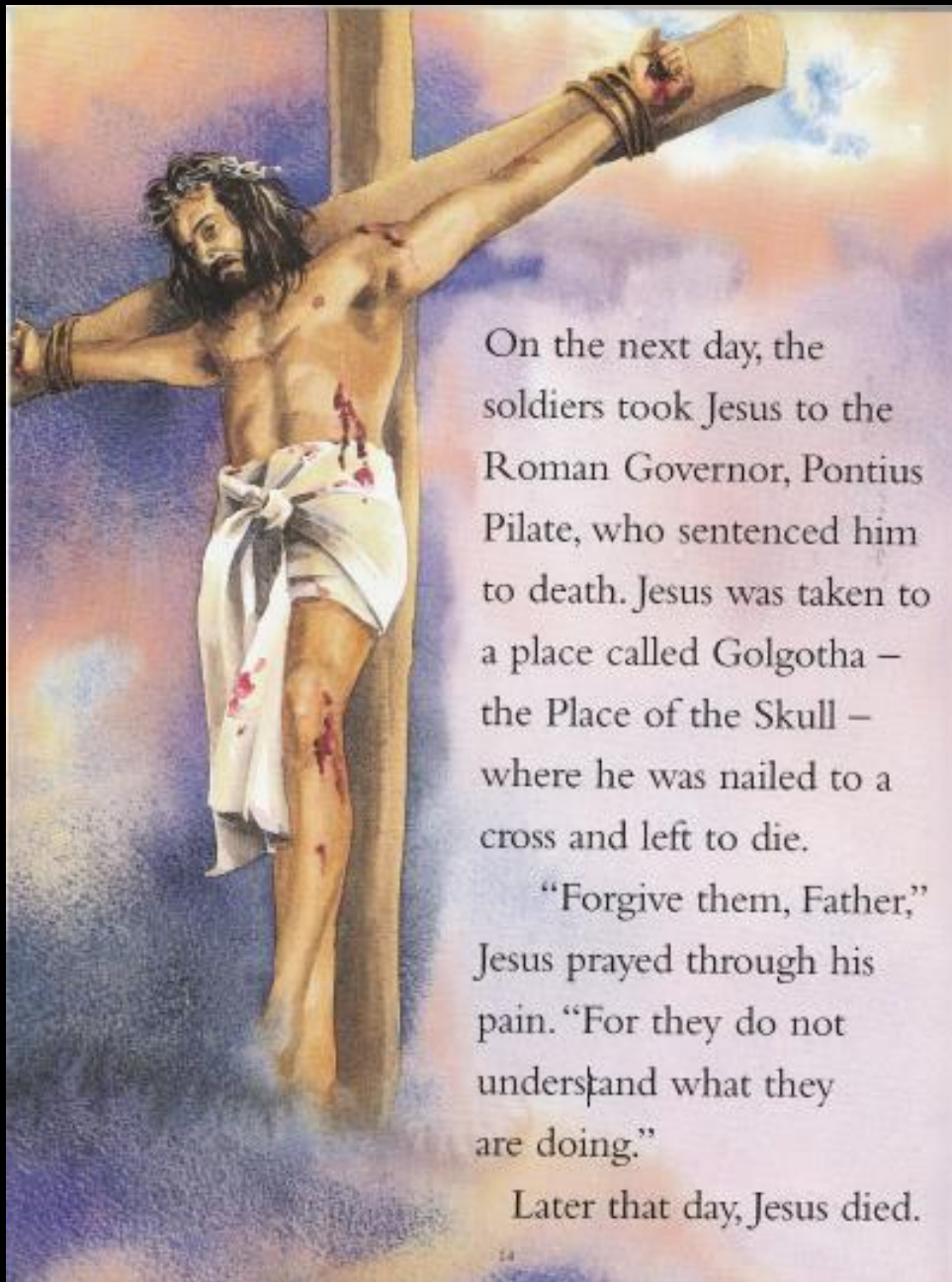


Later that night, Jesus went with the disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. He asked the disciples to stay awake with him while he prayed. While they were there, Judas led the soldiers to him.

“The man I kiss is the one you want,” Judas whispered to the soldiers. Then he went up to Jesus and kissed him.

At once, the soldiers grabbed Jesus and arrested him. They led him first to the priests who accused him of telling lies about being the Son of God and then they spat on him and threw him into prison.





On the next day, the soldiers took Jesus to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who sentenced him to death. Jesus was taken to a place called Golgotha – the Place of the Skull – where he was nailed to a cross and left to die.

“Forgive them, Father,” Jesus prayed through his pain. “For they do not understand what they are doing.”

Later that day, Jesus died.



Some of Jesus's close friends lifted his body gently down from the cross and wrapped it in a white robe. Then they placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. With heavy hearts, they rolled a stone across the entrance and wept. They thought that they would never see Jesus again.

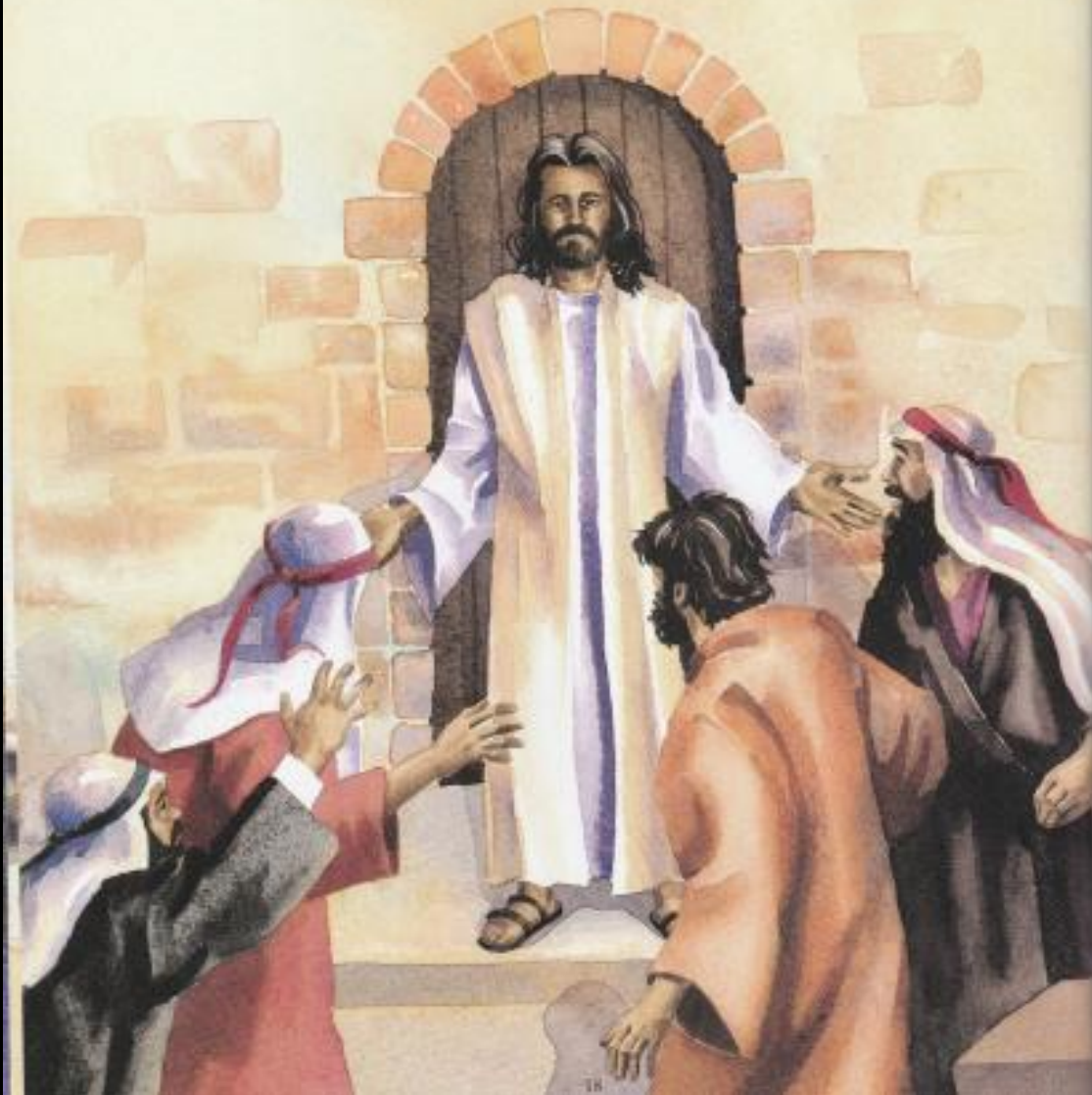
Three days later, Jesus's friends returned to the tomb and an amazing sight met their eyes. The stone had been rolled away and Jesus's body had gone! Now an angel, shining with light, stood beside the empty tomb. Before anyone could find their voice, the angel spoke:

"Don't be afraid," the angel said. "I know that you are looking for Jesus. But he is not here. For he has risen from the dead and has come back to life."

Jesus's friends were filled with hope and joy. But they were also worried. The news seemed too good to be true. How could Jesus have come back to life after they had seen him die?



But as they ran to tell the others what they
had seen and heard, a man stood in their path.
The man was Jesus!



Holy Communion

Today, nearly all Christians still share bread and wine together as part of their worship, just as the disciples did at the Last Supper. In this way, they remember the last meal that Jesus ate with his disciples. This service is often called Holy Communion or Mass. The bread and wine are blessed by the priest or minister. Sharing the bread and wine helps Christians to feel closer to God.



The Christian Cross

The cross is a very important symbol for Christians. It reminds them of Jesus's death and Resurrection.

A crucifix is a cross with the figure of Jesus on it (to show how he died).

A plain cross does not have a figure

on it. This shows that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus suffered five wounds when he was nailed to the cross and a plain cross sometimes has five jewels on it to represent these wounds.

