I hate bad surprises. Who do you blame when you’ve planned everything out and things don’t go right. Someone has messed up the parcel from Amazon, the builders managed to push over a wall, the vaccinations are not coming fast enough. It might be someone obvious – or in the last resort, God, but if you can’t finger someone specific you blame THEY. THEY messed it up. No one really knows who they are but it is a good ploy.

Mary was after the body of Jesus, She loved the man. He had changed her life. Just some dignity in death, some grieving by the grave, some special ointment for bad days. But she needed the corpse, and THEY have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don’t know where THEY have put him.’ The chances are that Mary had no idea who they were – Joseph of Arimathea – it was his tomb – maybe he wanted it emptied, the Roman authorities – they might have changed their mind about letting Joseph have the body – the Sanhedrin, the chief priests, Nicodemus, angels, the gardener. She didn’t know, but she knew she wanted to give the corpse what was due, herbs, spices, myrrh – just like the wise men – 35kg of it from a wealthy Nicodemus – but it was her turn – the little she could bring, and the corpse was gone.

She gets to Peter and John. . Luke says the disciples thought the women were talking nonsense. Unbelievable. John is telling the story about himself. ‘Finally the other disciple who had reached the tomb first, also when inside. He saw and believed.

Believed what? Believed the woman. It took real evidence with his own eyes to believe a woman who had been so disturbed in the past. Some men are like that anyway – You’re talking rubbish, woman. But the corpse had really gone. They were certainly not up for any miraculous resurrection, they were using logic. They, John continues, did not understand that Jesus would rise from the dead. Finally, seeing it with their own eyes, they believe Mary, Yes – whoever it was THEY had taken the body.

The men give up, they go back to their lodgings in Jerusalem, ‘not a lot we can do about it’, but Mary stays – silly woman. Thankfully, for our universe, she does not give up, she is determined to find both the culprit and the body. When another person arrives and she is distressed – and when asked why….

THEY have taken my Lord away – no idea where.

Even when she sees Jesus her reason takes over. It must be the gardener – maybe a Jesus look-a-like, my mind playing tricks.

Only when she hears his voice is the resurrection confirmed. Mary knows it is him. As Isaac Watts writes in one hymn ‘where reason fails with all her powers, there faith prevails and love adores. No room for scepticism when you see the man who was crucified standing in front of you.

Confusion reigns. She still wants to hold onto him – not let go ever again. But that is not how it works.

You could not make it up. The whole episode is about how belief and trust It takes time and trust to overcome rational, logical thinking and to come to terms with a miracle – not to see some other rational explanation. Always easier to believe in a conspiracy, in them doing something, or the messenger being a crackpot.

But today of all days is the moment to let your rational guard down and believe. For when you do you realise that the euangellion requires an openness to utter wonder. Go with it and confirm and reconfirm your trust in the surprise of love, watch for the miracle, it will keep changing your life with good surprises. Amen