

# The Garden of New Life

*At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden, a new tomb in which no-one had ever been laid.*

*John 19:41*

Outside the walls of Jerusalem there is a garden tomb – much like the one in which Jesus was laid – some say it was his tomb. The tomb is hewed out of rock and the groove in which the stone would be rolled remains intact. Around the tomb there is a well-tended garden. Here is a quiet peace insulated from the city traffic.



*Jesus said to her, "Mary." Then... "Do not hold onto me." John 20.16,17*

Jesus calls us by name. But not to hold on to him. He calls us to a task – to leave the security of the beloved and the familiar – to be free to risk ourselves to the world's scrutiny. He calls us to be gardeners of the Word – to scatter the seed and water it, to bring it to new life. And in the gardening, we too will grow - deeper roots, stronger shoots, and bear new fruit.

## Mary Magdalene

Did Mary ever garden?  
Dig the cold earth,  
sow seeds into the damp darkness.  
And wait?

Did she take cuttings?  
And slant them, plant them  
like crosses?

Then watch  
for life budding  
from dead wood?

And in the garden,  
in the morning light,  
when hope was dead and dry,  
was the stone of grief  
rolled away  
in sudden blossoming?



*Poem & Prayer: Eddie Askew, Easter 2000  
'There was a Garden'- printed with permission.  
Photo: Garden tomb, Jerusalem 2009. AEM*

## The Seeding

I do not know who rolled away the stone, or how.  
There is a tale of angels and of earthquakes,  
but the process is irrelevant –  
it matters only that the tomb was empty  
and that outside the gardener  
was seeding new life,  
scattering it prodigally into the waiting soil.

Morning has broken like the first morning.  
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing. Praise for the morning.  
Praise for them springing, fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning!  
Born of the one Light, Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning  
God's re-creation of the new day!