

The Parish Voice  
With  
Reflections  
For Lent, Holy Week and Easter



## Chris writes...



As we began Lent 2020, few of us would have realised the extent of the pandemic that was spreading across the world. We began it with hope and expectations; we blessed the new children's space in the church; we had two services on Ash Wednesday and we had a detailed plan of the services that would take place during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Although we could see the rising deaths in China and then Italy, we had no idea of the death toll our own country would soon be facing. And if someone had told us in advance, we probably wouldn't have believed how the next year would unfold; the amount of time we would each be spending at home and on Zoom, the new ways of living we would all have to adopt, the pressure that would be placed on our NHS and the numbers of school age children that would be home schooling. But as the weeks passed by, Lent increasingly became a time of wilderness for us all; particularly as we reached Mothering Sunday, by which time gathered worship was suspended and we had to quickly learn how to take everything online.

Now, a year on, we are beginning Lent 2021. As a church we have made far fewer plans; in the face of huge uncertainty about the next few weeks and whether it will be safe to worship in person, we are learning to be more responsive and to plan only a few weeks in advance.

Often during Lent we take time for self-reflection. It is a penitential period of preparation, and it is habitually one in which we practise self-discipline, think about our priorities, and consciously spend more time with God, in both prayer and biblical reading. This year, more than any other, we will come to that from very different places. For some of us, those who perhaps live alone and are retired or maybe on furlough, it might seem like there has been nothing but self-reflection for months on end. For others, particularly those working in the NHS, education and other key worker roles and those who have been juggling full time work with further periods of home schooling – it may feel like there isn't a spare moment in the day and having quiet time with God might seem like a distant dream. And because of that, I don't think there is necessarily one approach to Lent that will suit all of us this year.

One of our key bible stories for Lent is the that of Jesus' 40 days of testing in the wilderness. In the Matthew and Luke versions of this story, we hear in more detail how Jesus spent that time in the desert and how he was tempted three times. The Mark version, however, is far humbler, and in it we hear simply that:

*"he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels ministered to him." (Mark 1 verse 13)*

This verse particularly struck me this year: that amongst the temptation and wild animals, Jesus allowed the angels to minister to him. Perhaps then, in this our time of extended wilderness, what we really need is to allow the angels to minister to us too.

I expect we are all struck by how much this pandemic is affecting the mental health of everyone, from children and young people all the way up to the elderly. The loneliness, the isolation, the constant changes and uncertainty, the fear, the bad news and the grief, all play a part. Many are suffering from tiredness, anxiety, and depression and in an article at the end of December, the President of the Royal Society of Psychiatrists suggested that this pandemic was

*"probably the biggest hit to mental health since the second world war".*

Maybe this Lent then, the real focus of our attentions should be on self-care, well-being and on allowing God to minister into our very real pain. For each of us that will differ; for some it will be making space to be with God in silence, perhaps by committing time for meditation and reflection; for some it might be engaging in something creative; for some it will be ensuring you eat well; for some it might be taking more exercise; for some it will be ensuring times of connection with loved ones; and for others it will simply be a long hot bath with a good book. Practising self-care this Lent isn't about self-indulgence; instead it's about refreshing and renewing our minds, bodies, souls and spirits in whatever ways will help bring us to places of peace, in which we can abide in God's ministering presence.

In the book of Jeremiah we hear:

*"But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,  
whose confidence is in him.  
They will be like a tree planted by the water  
that sends out its roots by the stream.*

*It does not fear when heat comes;  
its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought  
and never fails to bear fruit."*

*Jeremiah 17:7-8*

This Lent then, let us all make it a time of sending out roots and finding the life-giving water that will continue to sustain us in this desert time of pandemic. Let us each find streams of rest, replenishment and renewal, through which we may be drawn closer to God. So that we, come Easter, may be able to bear fruit in the service of Christ. Amen.

### **Easter Wings**

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the same,  
Decaying more and more  
Till he became  
Most poor:  
With thee  
O let me rise  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this day thy victories:  
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin:  
And still with sicknesses and shame  
Thou didst so punish sin,  
That I became  
Most thin.  
With thee  
Let me combine,  
And feel this day thy victory;  
For, if I imp<sup>1</sup> my wing on thine,  
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

George Herbert

<sup>1</sup> 'imp' = graft

## UPCOMING SERVICES AT ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Usually, in Parish Voice, we print a full list of gathered Sunday worship, over the next month or two. At present our worship in Church has been suspended, due to the public health risks as the pandemic persists. At the time of publication we are unable to predict when we will be in a position to return to worship in Church. It is hoped that this may be in time for Holy Week, at the end of Lent.

**In the meantime online worship continues with this weekly pattern, accessible via our website: [The Parish Church of St John the Evangelist, Cambridge - St John the Evangelist Cambridge](#)**

- Weekly 'Church at Home' Sunday service, available from Saturday evening on our website
- Followed by 11am Sunday Coffee, on Zoom\*
- Sunday 6pm Book of Common Prayer Evensong, with a reflection, on Zoom
- Monday to Thursday 9am Morning Prayer, on Zoom
- Wednesday 10am Coffee Hour and reflection, on Zoom
- Wednesday 9pm Compline, on Zoom
- There are also several different Home Groups meeting on Zoom, most weeks. For further information please email Rev Chris Campbell, as above.
- Daily 'Thought for the Day' reflections are available on our website and social media, and there is a special series of reflections for Sundays in Lent and Holy Week in this Parish Voice.
- For those unable to access the internet, our weekly sermon can be listened to by phoning: 01223 643887. National faith resources are available from HOPE: 0800 804 8044. If anyone needs help purchasing a

computer in order to access online worship, please do talk to Rev James Shakespeare.

**The Calendar of online services, which will include Ash Wednesday, is as follows:**

- Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February: Ash Wednesday (Zoom act of worship at 10am and 7pm)
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February: 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent
- Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent
- Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Lent
- Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March: Mothering Sunday
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent
- Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March: Palm Sunday
- Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April: Maundy Thursday
- 2<sup>nd</sup> April: Good Friday
- 3<sup>rd</sup> April: Holy Saturday
- Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> April: Easter Day

We will notify parishioners as soon as we are able to return to gathered worship in our Church building at St John's. This year we will be holding our APCM meeting on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, Pentecost.

(\*For an invitation for our Zoom services, please email: [chris@revcc.uk](mailto:chris@revcc.uk)

Or if you would like to receive our weekly St John's e-news, email: [jshakespeare@btinternet.com](mailto:jshakespeare@btinternet.com) )

**Greetings** from **Homerton and the Charter Choir**. We are missing you, scattered as we are across the globe. However, we are rehearsing weekly on Zoom and hope to be able to share the results with you at Easter.

Trish



## News from the choir

Congratulations to Charlotte who was awarded with her dark blue ribbon in December. Here is a psalm that she wrote.

Praise God.  
Praise God for God's creation.  
Praise God for music.  
Praise God for beauty.  
Praise God for safety.  
Praise God for shelter.  
Praise God.

## **Saturday 20th March. Study Day**

### **Full Circle Spirituality**

Spirituality is about relationship: it is a gift given to us by God through which we get to know him better. Nurtured and cared for it can be a source of great comfort, peace and joy. But our spirituality is also something that can also be a great blessing to others through the way we interact with people, and highlight causes of great social need.

This study day offers the opportunity to learn and engage with our spirituality, to understand ourselves as spiritual people, those in relationship with God and one another. It will be interactive, fun and joyful, balancing teaching on the interior and exterior life with conversations with one another.

There will also be opportunities throughout the day for private prayer and silence, as well as coffee, socialising and laughter. The day will conclude with a communion service celebrating the place spirituality has in our faith journey.

If you have any questions regarding the day please contact either James Shakespeare or Tom Owen

**Location: St. John The Evangelist (the day will move to zoom should restrictions still be in effect)**

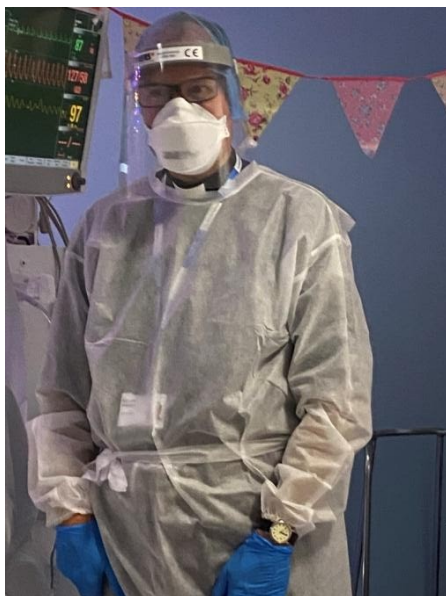
**10:00 AM-4:00 PM Study Day**

**4:15 PM A Eucharist in celebration of the Spiritual life**



## Serving as a part-time NHS Chaplain at Addenbrooke's

One of the sad contrasts between the first Covid-19 lockdown, spring 2020, and the present is the evident shift in public support for the NHS – or at least our expression of gratitude for all that doctors & nurses do. Whereas last year we ‘clapped for carers’, there now seems to be less gratitude expressed for their heroic sacrifices, and perhaps a detachment from the ‘reality on the ground’. Sensing the enormous toll that Covid is taking on health workers I was only too keen, when opportunity knocked, to be welcomed as a temporary Locum Chaplain at Addenbrooke's.



Since coming to St John's I've maintained a relationship with the Chaplaincy – after all Addenbrooke's is in our St John's parish – visiting parishioners in hospital and taking services in the Hospital Chapel. This role had already expanded, in recent months, when I was approached about helping to enable emergency hospital weddings. Essentially, as local vicar, I've been in a position to organise Special Marriage Licenses, not least when the Registrar General hasn't been able to grant permission as quickly as the Archbishop's Faculty Office. On three occasions in 2020, therefore, I was asked – and readily offered – to organise and officiate at such ceremonies, and recently I participated in a medical seminar, explaining my part in this valued ministry (see photo above).

It followed that already having a relationship with the Chaplaincy, I was in a good position to offer my services during the pandemic. I really felt morally obligated to offer myself in a small way, should my pastoral skills be of use. After a formal interview, and lengthy online training, I began my duties in September, therefore, and work half a day per week, on a Thursday

morning. Interestingly a number of other clergy have offered themselves in like manner, including Petra Shakeshaft, and a senior church leader, none other than Justin Welby, at St Thomas' Hospital! I am aware that my role, whilst demanding, is a drop in the ocean, in terms of the great need in the Health Service, and the unrelenting pressure on specialist doctors, nurses, and other professionals at Addenbrooke's, Royal Papworth, in GP surgeries, and other settings, up and down the UK. I hope it is also a sign of our support, at St John's, for those in our congregation who are medical practitioners.

Whilst my weeks are inevitably much more pressurised at present, I have to say it's a great privilege to be involved with the NHS. I find the hospital staff amazing, and am always warmly welcomed when visiting wards. There is a lovely team atmosphere in the Chaplaincy, and we always start the day with prayer. Essentially I go wherever I'm sent, and spend time with whoever wishes to open up and talk, whatever their faith background. Typically I might have significant conversations with a dozen or so patients per week, some with heart rending situations. Most are grateful for the care they are receiving, some are desperate, and due to the pandemic, all are grateful for human contact. At times nurses are too busy to enter into lengthy conversation, so Chaplains (like Chaplaincy volunteers) are able to provide reassurance, and the opportunity to make sense of what is happening. I don't feel I am doing very much, but I believe God is in every encounter, and I always come away inspired – if weary! I have not been with Covid patients, and realise their situation is a lot more intense. But the support of Locum Chaplains has freed up the specialist Chaplains to focus their care on those in greatest need, in the Covid wards & elsewhere. I take my hat off to them all.

Rev James Shakespeare

## Lyn

This January has marked something of a milestone for everyone who uses the church office. After 18 years of dedicated service, Lyn Harrison stepped down from her role as our Parish Administrator. I visited her - on her 60th birthday! - to make a presentation on behalf of us all and to convey a warm message of thanks and affection from our congregation. She will be much missed in her professional role, but I am glad to think that she will continue as a member of St John's.



Lyn began her appointment at St John the Evangelist on 2 April 2002, when Canon David Reindorp was Vicar. She arrived in post in succession to Jeanette Hawes (formerly of St John's, then Burwell, who tragically died last autumn). I was then Assistant Curate, before leaving for my new post in summer 2002. Lyn served under David, then Canon Sue Wyatt, before my return to St John's as Priest in Charge, in 2017.

There have been plenty of changes in St John's over the past 18 years, but Lyn has been a constant, faithfully serving the congregation and our many Community Room hirers, not least through an efficient administration of bookings, church events, Sunday bulletins, and service sheets, interfacing with members of the public, and maintaining a directory of Church members and contacts. As well as supporting various clergy, and working with a range of churchwardens, Lyn, with Stephen, has also given much time to organising and catering for wide-ranging St John's social events, summer fetes, Christmas fayres, and much else besides. Lyn has been generous in care and support of a significant number of church members, and diligent in remembering anniversaries or other special occasions. Lyn's hard work has left an indelible mark on St John's, and her friendship and support to many parishioners will continue to be much appreciated, as will her recent involvement with children's activities, not to mention her craft skills. The whole family have given of their time and resources and commitment, and on behalf of St John's I offer my heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

We all wish Lyn well and look forward to a continued future together of friendship and mutual support.

Rev James Shakespeare

# Overseas Mission

## Toilet Twinning

For those of us who take for granted the convenience of toilets in our homes and public places, the thought of not having access to them hardly bears thinking about. But this is the case for some two billion people around the world. A new proposal from the committee, which the PCC has agreed to fund, is Toilet Twinning, an initiative of Tear Fund. By donating £60 for each of the toilets at the St John's Centre we are helping to fund a project in a poor community that will enable families to build a basic toilet, have access to clean water and learn about hygiene. Once the twinning is established we will receive certificates to hang on the doors showing a photograph of our overseas toilet twin and GPS coordinates so we can look up the location on Google Maps. But we'll have to wait until St John's reopens for gathered worship to see the certificates.

For more information see <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>

## Mission Partners

We have received recent updates from Northern Uganda and Burundi.

In Arua schools have remained closed since March and the children do not have the luxury of home schooling. St Peter's Happiness Nursery has been allowed a rental holiday but the building has suffered the ravages of termites. We have sent the first of the 2021 grants to enable the teachers to repair chairs and desks and prepare the building for reopening, whenever that might be. It is unlikely that many parents will be in a position to pay a contribution for schooling because of the impact of the lockdown and because, as refugee families, their food ration has been reduced from 12kilos to 8 kilos for 2 months.

During the first lockdown many hundreds of young teenage girls in Arua and Koboko were subjected to rape and now their babies are being born. Under the guidance of Loice, the school Head, the teachers have been ministering to the girls both materially and spiritually to avoid attempted suicides, abortions and abandoned babies. They are helping through the first weeks and months of motherhood for which the girls are ill-prepared. We have sent a donation to help buy essentials.

In Burundi the Bethesda Project continues to support young people struggling with disabilities. Provision of wheelchairs and crutches to several individuals has made an unbelievable difference to their lives. Outdoor activities, so vital to their welfare, will resume as soon as the pandemic allows. The project has still not been able to raise sufficient funds to buy a replacement 4 x 4, so vital for the work.

In September the Central Bank stopped accepting sterling remittances, making it very difficult to send cash to pay salaries: other methods incur additional charges. However, at the end of January we received the following from Rev Rob Burch, our UK contact for Bethesda: *'Just to let you know that, after months of frustration, we have finally got funds out to the project via what appears to be a reliable method. Thank you for all your prayers'*.

Having supported Kylie and Bhim in India for many years we are now, for various reasons, collaborating with the Church Mission Society to identify a new mission partner whom we will help to fund with our donations. There will be a further update next time.

*Please pray for the safety and welfare of all our overseas contacts and their colleagues at this difficult time.*

Katie

From the Parish Registers		
<b>Wedding</b>	19th December 2020	Ian Sheridan and Philippa Hood
<b>Funeral</b>	1st December 2020	Jeanette Hawes, formerly St John's Parish Administrator
	7th January 2021	Ronald Mason, of Huntingdon, who grew up in St John's many years ago
<b>Wedding Anniversary</b>	13th January 2021	70th anniversary of the marriage of Beryl and Michael Johnson

## Lenten Appeal 2021 at St John's

You will recall that last year the first lockdown was announced soon after we launched our Lenten Appeal. There was a brief respite when the church was open for gathered worship and we were able to access the appeal literature and donation envelopes but this didn't last for long. Thank you to everyone who supported A ROCHA UK and the BETHESDA PROJECT, Burundi in 2020.

As we approach Lent again it seems logical to continue our support for last year's charities, since the appeal was so curtailed that many missed the opportunity to donate. Please do support these charities again even if you did so last year. Things are rather different now, with no leaflets and donation envelopes in church, so here are details of the two charities.

**A ROCHA UK** is committed to helping Christians in the UK to care for the natural world. 'We believe that God made the earth and that it is important to him. That is why we want to make nature – enjoying, nurturing and protecting it – a part of life for all Christians.' The biblical message is: God loves everything he has made and wants us all to work together to value and protect it. A ROCHA UK has also developed Eco

Church, an award scheme for churches of all denominations in England and Wales who want to demonstrate that they care for God's earth. Eco Church can help churches to 'go green' in all areas of church life, from worship to building management, outreach to personal lifestyle. As already announced elsewhere, Roger is coordinating a group at St John's to explore this route to becoming an Eco Church. A ROCHA's guidance will be available to the group.

In the north-east of Burundi, one of the poorest countries in the world, the **BETHESDA PROJECT** is one of our Overseas Mission Partners. The project works under the Bishop of Muyunga and is financed from the UK via the Kepplewray Trust. Initially established to provide outdoor activities and team building for disabled young people, it has expanded towards healthcare, working alongside government health clinics, because the needs are so extreme. Bethesda staff aim to show the love of God in helping people to obtain the right treatment. They are still looking to fund the purchase of a second-hand Toyota from Tanzania which our donations will support. The original vehicle, provided when the project started 12 years ago and essential for the work there, is now unsafe and cannot be repaired.

For further information and donating details see:

**A Rocha** <https://arocha.org.uk/> The donate button is at the top of the home page. Or ring the office on 020 8574 5935 for bank transfer and cheque details.

**Bethesda** <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/donation-web/charity?charityId=1000798>  
Scroll down to the Donate button and in the message box please indicate that your donation is from St John the Evangelist Church, Cambridge.

Cheques payable to 'Keppleway Trust (Burundi)' can be sent to The Keppleway Centre, Broughton-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA20 6HE. Bank transfers can be made to: Account name: Keppleway Trust (Burundi); Sort code: 20-04-68; Account number: 13445771

In both cases please do sign up for gift aid if appropriate.

THANK YOU

Katie

## Congratulations

Congratulations to ordinands Tom and Will on their new appointments:

Tom will be leaving Cambridge in June, with his wife Robyn and children Anah and Jacob, for Stoke-on-Trent, where he will take up a Curacy in St Andrew's Church in Sneyd Green.

Will is moving to St Neots. He writes:

'I've been appointed as Curate of the Parish of St Neots with Eynesbury, where I look forward to serving God and His people for the next three years, from July 2021. It's a parish including two Churches, both of which are in the Liberal Catholic tradition of the Church of England - St Neots Parish Church, and St Mary's Eynesbury. As a place, St Neots is almost completely new to me - although I have run in a couple of cross country races in Priory Park a few years ago, when I was an undergrad at Cambridge University! St Neots is a market town, and is well connected to Peterborough (near where my girlfriend Laura lives), London, and Cambridge. I'm hugely looking forward to my Curacy, and - especially being so close to Cambridge - I'll hopefully be able to come back and visit whenever I can! '

## Eco Church

I am very pleased to say that we have had our first Eco Church meeting at St John's and have finally kicked the ball into play. We had hoped to get started a year or so but a few things got in the way! One or two other local churches, St Paul and St Barnabas in particular, have made good progress and will be a valuable source of advice.

Our start on this journey comes just as Eco Church is celebrating its 5th anniversary. The target when it was launched was to reach 10% of churches (about 4,500) across England and Wales in 10 years. This 10% was seen as a crucial tipping point after which environmental awareness amongst churches would grow inevitably. Now, five years on, 3,100 churches have registered and 1,000 awards have been achieved.

Your involvement as a congregation is vital and we will be keeping you informed with regular updates on our ideas, targets and achievements. However, if you would like to be more actively involved that would be great. Eco Church will impact on every aspect of church life, our services, prayers, garden management, recycling, energy use, education and interaction with our whole community.

With the Glasgow Climate Change conference in November of this year, it is a great opportunity for St John's to make a difference. If you would like to join our action group please contact Roger on [rlilley71@gmail.com](mailto:rlilley71@gmail.com) and we will let you know more details. Why not visit the Arocha Eco Church web site?

Roger



## Pets and Poetry

My passion is the pets I have loved and cared for. I have also written poems about some of them.

My first pet was a Shetland sheep dog called Puck given me by my parents at the age of 8 because I was nervous of dogs. He became my friend and lived to the age of 11 or 12. He was blown through the French windows of our house when a rocket landed at the bottom of our garden towards the end of the second world war in 1945. His thick coat saved him but he went downhill afterwards and died peacefully.

When we lived in Cumbria in the 1970's I had a friend who bred Shelties as they were called. I often used to visit her. She also was one of the judges at Crufts. I wrote a poem for her called "Champions".

Horses also I loved. My first pony was called Gypsy and was given me by our local Milkman when I was in my teens. We lived in East Finchley opposite the Five Bell Pub. I used to ride her on the grass verge of the North Circular Road – you couldn't do that now! My father had a stable built by the garage so that I could look after her. We also had fields next door to our house belonging to a local business man who gave me permission to ride her there and to put up jumps for practice. I also had a black Labrador

retriever called Spiv (I can't remember why). She used to accompany us when we went riding on Hampstead Heath.

When I married Michael Gypsy was sold to a local Riding School. My mother looked after Spiv. When we lived in Preston, Lancashire my mother sent Spiv by train to be with me so that I shouldn't feel lonely. We used to have some lovely walks in the countryside. Spiv also had 8 puppies by mistake. However we found homes for them all.

When we lived in Cumbria after Michael left the Army I had a Labrador-cross called Penny – a token payment to the Care Home where she had been found as a stray. They wouldn't accept anything else. She was rather small for a Labrador and very lovable. She had no vices. She died when we moved to Eastbourne. Waiting for me just outside the house a car ran over her. I can't think why it happened. I really missed her. Jenny, my daughter wrote a poem about her.

My last pet was a golden Labrador-retriever cross belonging to my eldest daughter. I used to look after her when they went on holiday. She went blind at about the age of 12 so they had her put to sleep. I wrote a prayer for her which I gave them to read when they placed her ashes in

the river where she used to enjoy swimming. None of them could read it because of the tears. I had to read it for them.

Not only dogs and horses were my pets. There was a hedgehog who was a victim of the 'rocket' and taken away at Christmas time. There was Meg the Rook who fell out of her nest or was pushed out of it. And at the present time there are the birds in our Garden and the squirrels who give great entertainment. There were the Great Tits who built a nest in one of our walls and we watched the pair flying in and out of the hole feeding them.

I remember reading a book about the life of Albert Schweitzer. He was a well-known Organist. He became a medical missionary and went to Africa to care for the natives. He believed in the sacredness of all created life and especially in all creatures great and small. He once told a friend off for slapping a fly on his arm. He said "you shouldn't have done that. That was my fly." There are people like him who care about the lowliest of the species and we see this on some of the TV programmes which help us to love and care for all of God's wonderful creation.

## CHAMPIONS

'Neath rocky crag and moorland Fell,  
A sheltered nook, a haven hold,  
The happy home of a band of dogs  
Nurtured by love within the fold.

From shaggy ball to frilly form  
The future champions budding grow  
With pointed nose and gentle eyes  
Seek out all they long to know.

Across the run the champions go,  
Frisky trot and bobbing tail,  
Frilly ruffle and white bib  
Set off in splendour on the trail.

In ecstasy they yearn to greet  
The stranger who stops to gaze  
On leaping, shimmering, golden  
forms  
Whose grace and skill amaze.

Shelves of gleaming silver cups  
Declare the victor's glory day,  
Rows of beribboned rosettes  
Denote the honours gained away.

And when their glory's faded past  
And we their names repeat  
Surely, in some celestial home  
They'll keep a watch at the Master's  
feet.

*Sumburgh House Kennels  
'Shelties'*

Beryl

## **Eulogy given by Rev James Shakespeare at the Funeral of Jeanette Hawes (1st Dec 1947 to 15th Nov 2020)**

There are many things you would want to say about Jeanette, as a dearly loved wife, mother, grandmother, relation and friend, and today – on Jeanette's Birthday – we gather to celebrate her life, all that she meant to us, and to pay tribute to someone who touched our lives in so many ways, and whose brightness lit up our world.

So firstly I'm going to say something about Jeanette, on behalf of the family; then Marie will give a brief tribute, as a life-long friend and former work colleague. And later I will offer a few closing words of spiritual reflection.

What then can we say about Jeanette?

Family, for Jeanette, was everything; and not just her Cornish family, or her Cambridgeshire family – vital as these both were – but the wider circle, also, of her close friends, and indeed her Church family, at St John's in Cambridge, which was such a happy and life-giving time, at the heart of life.

For Jeanette, birthdays and anniversaries and Christmas were all important – so well done, Jeanette, for planning this occasion to be on your Birthday and in the run-up to Christmas (indeed, such was Jeanette's sense of organisation, that most of this service was planned by her in meticulous detail).

So family was all important to Jeanette. Rooted in a deeply in-grained sense of generosity and commitment to others, informed by her Christian faith, Jeanette was rock-like in her ability to remember anniversaries, and to celebrate and seek out the good of others, her family and friends and neighbours, never expecting anything in return. And she cherished, with all of her being, in recent years in Burwell, the joy of looking after Freya and Florence, her beloved grandchildren, for whom she will always remain the perfect Granny...

Jeanette was a keen photographer – she'd have loved to study art, when she was younger, if she'd been given half the chance! – and she had an innate ability to capture the moment, harnessing, through memory, so many blessed family occasions. And I know Tony has a mass of family albums, capturing so many unforgettable family moments.

For Jeanette, with her warm, caring and vibrant character, always full of smiles, nothing was ever too much for her, and she loved to bring joy into the lives of others.

Jeanette was born in Liskeard in Cornwall, in 1947, one of two children of Grace and Maurice Rendle; she also had, as well as her brother Robert, a step-brother, Peter. To say that Jeanette was proud of her Cornish roots and her extended Cornish family would be something of an understatement! And it's worth remembering that having established her own family in Cambridge, almost every holiday – when Cath and Tom were growing up – was held back in Cornwall, staying with her parents, slotting right back into the home life she'd left behind. And it's wonderful that there are so many Cornish family members joining us online, during this challenging period of social-distancing. Jeanette really wanted her Cornish roots reflected in this service, so thank you for joining us.

One can imagine that it would have taken a lot for someone like Jeanette to move away from the rugged beauty of the Cornish coastline, and close-knit family of her early years – where she was brought up and educated, and after leaving Grammar School, began her career at the Bank in Saltash! But then, one summer along came a young man named Tony, with his friends, on holiday from East Anglia, and the rest, as they say, is history. And how wonderful that next year, 2021, Jeanette and Tony would have celebrated 50 years of happy marriage, of friendship and of loving commitment to each other. As Jeanette commented to Tony, before her death – reflecting her strength of character and resilience, in the face of suffering, as well as the many good times – 'I've had a good life, and I'm not going to be sad.'

Jeanette moved with Tony to Cambridge, and began a new life in this part of the world, putting down fresh family roots in another great place - a city of spires, of town and gown, and – in contrast to Cornwall's dramatic coastline – of open fens and waterways. How much landscapes shape, variously, our ways of doing things, in this small island (as Bill Bryson called it)! Jeanette and Tony were married at Cambridgeshire Shire Hall, and settled on Perne Avenue. Tom was born in 1976 and Catherine in 1978. And in later years Jeanette's parents also moved up here, to be cared for until Grace's death, when Maurice returned again to Cornwall, such was the pull of his roots.

Marie will say something about Jeanette as a work-colleague in Cambridge, but let me just say a word about their life – as a family – in Cambridge, at St John's Church, where I had the privilege of being Curate and working with Jeanette, over 20 years ago, and recently returning as Vicar. Cambridge and St John's really was a special time of life for Jeanette and Tony, and here Tom and Catherine grew up, in our local community, at Morley School, in the thriving Church Choir, and Youth Group, and as part of

the wider Church family. It was a unique and happy time, with summer BBQs and Fetes, and joining together for the good of others, rooted in the worship of our local Christian community. And how much we appreciated Jeanette's work, following her time at the Bank, as Parish administrator, skilfully oiling the wheels of our Church community.

Some 20 years ago Jeanette and Tony moved to Burwell, and there she continued employment, this time with Robertson and Davies in Fordham. As I say, Jeanette cherished her relationship with her grandchildren, Freya and Florence, as they grew up... Naturally she was devastated by the tragic loss of Tom in South Africa, following an accident, and missed closer contact with her grandsons, Christian & Sebastian. But such was her inner strength that somehow she came through, trusting in God, and staying positive.

For many, the diagnosis of leukaemia, nearly two years ago, would have been a crippling blow. But not for Jeanette, for despite all the uncertainties, the ups and downs of treatment, she endeavoured to make the most of life – as with last year, when she & Tony still managed a holiday in local Norfolk, with Cath, Rob and the girls; and even this summer, after the first lockdown, a final trip to the seaside. The family remained a constant throughout, and up until three weeks before her death, Jeanette remained strong, supported by Tony and Catherine, and greatly helped by the nurses from Arthur Rank. But latterly she knew the end was coming, and plans had been made. And Jeanette lived, as she died, in faith and love, with courage, dignity and hopefulness. And let me end this part, with some well known words, by Mary Lee Hall:

“If I should die and leave you here a while  
Be not like others sore undone,  
Who keep long vigil by the silent dust.  
For my sake turn again to life and smile  
Nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do  
Something to comfort other hearts than thine.  
Complete these dear unfinished tasks of mine  
And I perchance may therein comfort you.

## Safeguarding at St John's

The Church of England's guidance on safeguarding states that, "The care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in Church activities is the responsibility of the whole Church." At St John's, we actively support this message, because it is vitally important that our whole congregation feels safe to worship and participate in church life. We work closely with the diocese to ensure that all of our policies and procedures are up to date, and you can find information about safeguarding on display in the church or on our website:

<https://www.stjohntheevangelistcambridge.org/safeguarding/>.

If you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding, please speak to James or Chris, or contact Sarah Talmage at [s.e.ward.95@cantab.net](mailto:s.e.ward.95@cantab.net) or via the Parish Office. If you would like to read more about the Church of England's policy, please read Promoting a Safer Church: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/PromotingSaferChurchWeb.pdf>.

Sarah Talmage  
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Thou the word and Lord  
In all time and space  
Heard, beheld, adored,  
With all ages poured  
Forth before thy face,

Lord, what worth in earth  
Drew thee down to die?  
What therein was worth,  
Lord, thy death and birth?  
What beneath thy sky?

Light above all love  
By thy love was lit,  
And brought down the Dove  
Feathered from above  
With the wings of it.

Swinburne

Despite all the setbacks of 2020, I am delighted to say that although our fair trading has been spasmodic we have managed to achieve a respectable turnover, thanks to all of you who continued to purchase goods from my house while the church was closed and then from the Wilkinson Room in October, November and December when St John's reopened for gathered worship.


Since writing in December that we hoped to be back on 7 February everything has changed and we can't predict when we will return. Being an optimist I'm hoping that we might have a stall on Palm Sunday, 28 March, but time will tell. In the meantime don't forget that the goods in my house are accessible if anyone has need of anything. A large delivery arrived here at the end of January (including much-requested sugar at last, which had been stuck in the blockage at Felixstowe for weeks), so I have plenty of stock at home. Just phone or email me and you can either collect your orders from 61 Rock Road as part of your daily walk or I can deliver them to you as part of mine. Please ask for a spring catalogue at the same time and check out Easter Eggs, a new range of greetings cards and goods which have been unavailable for a while.

Here is what Traidcraft says about the way forward:

**Traidcraft are passionate** about trade, social and environmental justice. We're the original fair trade pioneers in the UK, and advocate the importance of organic farming, sustainability, and transparency to the lives of growers and artisans around the world. And we're not stopping there.

We are saving vanishing traditional skills from extinction, and celebrating a world of creativity and culture through quality fair trade products. We offer sustainable fashion, home and garden goods and handmade, ethical, fair trade gifts. Our sustainable range of future-proof groceries also includes a Great Taste Award winning range of Fairtrade tea, organic coffee, organic chocolate and a delicious range of vegan chocolate.

The Fairtrade Foundation tells us:

We drink an estimated 5.5 billion cups of coffee a day, worldwide. If that coffee was Fairtrade, farmers would get an additional £5.5 million per day to develop their communities. Buy right & make your next coffee a Fairtrade coffee. 

Katie Knapton Tel 212089  
[katieknapton@talktalk.net](mailto:katieknapton@talktalk.net)



## A Visit to Jerusalem

Around “Holocaust Memorial Day” this year, I was reminded that a few days later in February, it is sixty years since I had to manage the most horrific project of my whole career.

The Marconi Company, for whom I worked as a senior television engineer, signed a contract with “Capital Cities Broadcasting” of New York, managed by Milton Fructman, to provide a four camera television production system, to televise and record the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. I was asked to manage this project. As a young engineer I was very confident on the technical side, but had no idea of the horrors to come. We were thrilled to be in Jerusalem!

To provide the system needed, we shipped out a television outside broadcast unit and a large van containing the extra equipment. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of February, 1961, Terry Roy and I flew to Tel-Aviv and then took a taxi to Jerusalem, where we were amazed to find it below zero and four inches of snow.

The next morning we had a meeting at the office of David Arrad, our lawyer, and with Milton Fructman to discuss the next move. Milton said that he had not got permission to televise the trial. The Prime minister, David Ben Gureon, refused to give permission and the Judges said that cameras would distract the witnesses. After a long discussion it was decided to go ahead with the installation. We had found a spare room above a bank across the street, where we installed the four-camera production system and the video recording equipment. The main problem was to get the camera and audio cables across a main street about 200 feet to the trial building. We got a local company to install a heavy steel cable across the street to which we then attached our cables. The next task was to get the cables to the camera and microphone positions without being seen, quite a task. We had also devised a plan to hide the cameras in the court room. We also agreed a plan when next meeting the Judges, we got them to gather at the witness stand and see themselves on the screen, but no cameras in sight. They were amazed and said we could go ahead now and televise the trial. Milton was so relieved.

By now our operational crew and camera men had arrived. My job was to ensure that the production system was in full working order, and every morning I had to go across to the trial building to check the cameras and see that the camera men had arrived.

The Court Room had been a cinema, but converted for this special purpose. Where the screen had been, benches had been placed for the judges. Below them was the prosecutor team led by Gideon Housner. In the centre of the main floor was the witness stand.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1961, the trial began, which was in Hebrew, but translated to English and German. Earlier that morning I saw crowds of people queueing up to get in and noticed how many had tattoo numbers on their arms. At 10am everyone stood up as the judges arrived and took their seats. When the door of the glass dock opened, there was complete silence, as two guards brought Eichmann in and sat him down.

The chief prosecutor formally welcomed the judges, then the proceedings began. During the first two days, the accusations were read. Eichmann always pleaded not guilty. The proceedings moved on and witnesses were brought to the stand to give their testimonies. Having to listen to their horrific stories on a daily basis was a harrowing challenge for us.

I remember one particular witness, he told how he, his wife and two daughters were taken to a concentration camp. He was separated from them and given a job to empty the bodies from large vans which had been converted to mobile gas chambers. The next day a van arrived and when he opened the door he found the bodies of his wife and children. He told the court how he had carefully removed them, placed them on the ground and laid over them.

He pleaded with the guard to be shot, saying that he no longer wished to live. The guard kicked him and walked off. He carefully laid their bodies in the huge burial pit. At this point at the trial, he collapsed with grief and lay beneath the witness stand, where he was carefully helped away. As the trial went on Eichmann showed no change of expression or remorse at all.

During one session, Eichmann said he could not hear the proceedings. I was asked to investigate the problem. I had noticed that Eichmann constantly played with the headphones' lead and it may have become disconnected. I took a new pair to install for him. I was ushered into the enclosed dock with him and felt an uncanny chill around me. I put the headphones on him and asked him if he could hear to which he replied yes. Outside the dock I started to shake and felt quite unwell! It was several minutes before I could resume my place at the production area.

The prosecution team had obtained Nazi films on Eichmann so it was decided that he should see them. Eichmann was brought down to the

basement room where the viewing was to take place. Gideon Housner and a judge were also present. The films showed Eichmann committing the most evil atrocities, far too horrific to describe. He was always asked what was going through his mind as he watched. He showed no remorse. On one occasion he said he would be much happier going to his grave if he could have exterminated twice the number of Jews!

When the trial eventually finished after four and a half months, we were mentally and physically exhausted. The verdict would not be announced for two months, so that was the end of the contract. We had to pack up and leave for home. The feelings this experience has left me with over the past sixty years are always there. This momentous time in my life is a reminder of the need for forgiveness. Some memories never seem to go away.

Ron Huntsman

## Afterword

This must have been an unimaginable and abhorrent time for anyone and especially for an unworldly 27 year old, who had come from the Northumbrian countryside, possibly unaware of the atrocities committed during the 2nd World War. I have tried to imagine how I should feel had I been in his place and how, as a Christian, I could cope with forgiveness, or SHOULD I cope with forgiveness?

The abomination of planning such activities is unimaginable, and a body of people was responsible. One of whom was Adolf Eichmann. He had been married and had four sons, of whom little is known now. He must have experienced some feelings of love and kindness towards his family -and we know that he was very fond of his mother. So how and why was he the monster who was depicted at the trial? That is certainly the man who was in the dock !

So to return to the question of forgiveness, which brings us to some deep moral issues which at some time in our lives have to be faced and 'grappled' with. This, I have done since meeting Ron in 1961 and hearing his story and others of that magnitude. The Bible teaches much about forgiveness, we pray the Lord's Prayer...'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, ' Jesus calls down from the cross, 'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do'..... in asking God to forgive those who were torturing and crucifying Him - Corrie Ten Boom faced the torturer and killer of her sister Betsie who died in Auschwitz, at a talk she was giving shortly after the War. A man approached her and she slowly began to recognise him as this person. Could she face him, could she forgive him as he held out his hand? But then the unexpected happened.... he ASKED to be forgiven! We have to involve repentance in order to be forgiven. Jesus tells us quite explicitly that we have to repent, and within a framework of reconciliation/love for the person(s) being forgiven.

It also brings into consideration when thinking of atrocious crimes against humanity, the question of admission of guilt and following punishment and a deeper level of just how we are able to forgive. Yet, Jesus did not die in vain on the cross, but to reconcile us with God, who forgives us and draws us to Himself. God so loved the world (us) that He gave His only begotten Son that we might be forgiven and inherit the wonder and precious gift of eternal life.

'Father, forgive them for they know not what they do!'

June

## For Lent 2021

Lent is traditionally a time when, as Christians, we take some special time to concentrate on our discipleship and journey with Christ. Sometimes we give things up, and sometimes we take things up, but more than anything it is an invitation to draw closer to our God in both prayer and in the stories of Christ's life, death and resurrection.

**The Church of England's Lent resources** theme for 2021, building on the success of recent years, is entitled *Live Lent: God's Story, Our Story*. It is based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent book for 2021, *Living His Story* by Hannah Steele, which many of our Home Groups will be looking at. They have also produced a small book of daily reflections (costing £1.99 and available from Church House Publishing) and all these reflections will be available in a free app.

There are a selection of **other resources** both online and in print available for Lent 2021. Highlights include:

*Reflections for Lent 2021*- Covering Monday to Saturday each week, it offers reflections on readings from the Common Worship Lectionary, written by some of today's leading spiritual and theological writers.  
(ISBN: 9781781401828)

*Thy Will be Done* – Bloomsbury's Lent Book for 2021 written by Stephen Cherry and focussing on the Lord's Prayer. (ISBN: 9781472978257)

*Rooted in Love* – SPCK's Lent Book for 2021 edited by Bishop Sarah Mullally.

Included in this edition of *Parish Voice*, we have also produced our own 'in house' Lent and Holy Week reflections, and we will be continuing with Daily Thoughts for the Day via our website and social media.

### Lent Groups

All our home and bible study groups will also be continuing to meet on Zoom during Lent and many of them will be using the *Living His Story* book mentioned above.

If you would like to join a group, please contact Chris or James. If we have enough interest, we might put on an extra group for Lent, otherwise we will slot people into our existing groups, which are available both during the day and in the evening.

## Lent Study Day

James and Tom (our ordinand on attachment from Ridley Hall) are planning a Study Day on March 20<sup>th</sup> entitled **Inside and Out: Full circle Spirituality**. The day aims to provide participants with tools to understand and develop their spirituality and includes an overview of the contemplative tradition with accompanying practices for anyone to try for themselves. At present it isn't known if this will take place in person or on Zoom. For more information, see Tom's more detailed announcement about it elsewhere in this edition.

## Lent for Families

Lent and Easter are possibly the most important seasons of the church year. But Lent isn't the easiest of our Christian seasons to share with children, partly because it's so long. So here are some top tips for the whole family to journey through Lent together.

- The 40 days of Lent represent Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness. Start Lent by reading the story (Luke 4. 1-13)
- Surprisingly, there are 46 days between Ash Wednesday and Holy Saturday, because Sundays are actually excluded from the 40 days. So treat them as 'little Easters' and relax anything you are fasting from.
- Particularly for younger children, don't try to give up something for the whole time. Instead try doing something different every day; the 'Love Life Live Lent' book is a good resource for this, as is the 40acts challenge website. Or you could come up with your own grid of ideas!
- Consider a Lenten Discipline you could take up as a whole family. Maybe you could try to read a bible story each day, say grace at a particular meal or pray together more often.
- Lent is also a good time as a family to think about generosity and charitable giving. As a family, why not spend time researching charities you would like to support, and think of some ways to raise money.
- Lent draws to an end during Holy Week. This week is filled with symbolism and emotion and children can really enjoy joining in with it all; from the joyous waving of palms on Palm Sunday, thinking about eating together and feet washing on Maundy Thursday, the sadness of Good Friday and finally the final triumph of Easter day. You could choose to finish Lent by reading a little bit of the Passion Story every day during Holy Week (Mark 14 - 16).

Chris

# Reflections



Photo by Kyle Cottrell on [www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com)

Lent, Holy Week and Easter 2021

## Ash Wednesday



‘Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called’

(1 Tim 6.11, 12).

Cameron Wellington was a strong and healthy nineteen-year-old with a passion for wrestling. In November last year, he developed symptoms of COVID-19 and rapidly deteriorated. He was rushed to hospital but died the following day. In an interview his parents gave to warn of the dangers of the disease, they told how their grief-stricken Christmas was lightened only by having in their home at that time their beloved Cameron’s ashes.

The liturgy for Ash Wednesday reminds me, as that interview did, that we shall all ‘return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return’ (Gen 3.19). Many of us will be familiar with the allusions to this verse in the words used at funerals as the body of the deceased is committed to the ground or the incinerator: ‘earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust’.

While such words can strike dread into the bravest of souls, the theology on which both the funeral liturgy and the liturgy for Ash Wednesday is



based is ultimately one of hope. At funerals, the body is returned to dust 'in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life'. Similarly, in Ash Wednesday services, worshipers receiving the imposition of ashes on their foreheads are reminded that those ashes are a sign of our penitence and mortality 'for it is by God's grace alone that we receive eternal life'.

That is the wonderful paradox of Ash Wednesday. As we contemplate our shortcomings and mortality, our attention is drawn not only to the events of Good Friday but also to those of Easter Sunday. There we find that the dust of that tomb, just as the dust within our hearts, is dispelled by love. That love bursts away not only the stone that seals that tomb but the stone of sin that seals our hearts in cold and dark. This is the love that beckons us today, in the earnest words of Paul to Timothy in our Epistle reading, to 'take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called'.

*Lord, thank you that, as today's collect puts it, we are given in Christ 'perfect remission and forgiveness'. Amen.*

Peter S Heslam, Assistant Priest

## First Sunday of Lent

*The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness 40 days being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals and the angels were ministering to him.*

(Mark Chapter 1. 12-13)

This is such a familiar story for many of us that it can be quite tricky to notice it. After his baptism and before beginning his ministry, Jesus spent time in the wilderness where Satan tempted him. But look how he got from baptism to wilderness. I'd never noticed that word 'drove' before, and it brought me up short. Drove. It suggests compulsion, being transported reluctantly - a wilderness in the company of Satan is not a destination of choice.

For many of us this has been a wilderness year of cancellations, disappointments and boredom. It's unknown territory where we have been as isolated, and maybe as solitary, as Christ was in his wilderness. And, like Jesus, we did not choose this, but, like him, we are here. So this week, at the start of Lent, let's take a few moments to stop and look around at our particular wildernesses. It's unfamiliar, unpredictable, wild, not calculated or planned, which can be threatening. But it's also freeing and gloriously quiet. In the wilderness there is time to observe things. Remember how much we all noticed the spring in 2020? Remember how clearly we heard the birdsong, saw the sky? Maybe being in a wilderness isn't all bad?

There are wild animals in the wilderness but we don't have to pay attention to them. Take a moment to have a look at yours. Mine tend to be herds of What-ifs and swarms of Maybes but I don't have to listen to them, just as Jesus didn't have to listen to Satan or the animals. Instead, the angels ministered to him and we can look out for them instead. Sometimes their ministry is a call from a friend, a smile from a neighbour, a cup of tea in a comfortable chair. This week please find a few breaths to look at your wilderness and consider the freedom you might find there. Consider too who is ministering to you and accept their efforts with gratitude.

*Dear Lord, help me to accept where I am and to remember that you have placed me here and accompany me. Grant me the grace to notice those who minister to me this week and the energy to minister to others. Amen.*

**Jane Gardiner**

## Second Sunday in Lent

*“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?”*

(Mark 8.36)

(The Gospel reading is St. Mark chapter 8. 31–38).

The word ‘soul’ is mentioned 754 times in the Old Testament and 102 in the New Testament. So, what is our soul ? There are many varied and complex definitions, but a very simple one is:-

‘The spiritual part of humans as distinct from the physical part.’ (Oxford dictionary)

This thought then led me to thinking about the hymn ‘ It is well with my soul,’ written in 1873 by Horatio Spafford, and the background story to this hymn. This story is one of tragedy, but also full of amazing faith.

Horatio Spafford was a devout, Christian man, a devoted husband to wife Anna and father to 5 children. He was a supporter of 2 great preachers of the time—Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey. In 1871 his young son died aged just 4 years old, and the same year the Great Chicago fire reduced his property investments to ashes.

To help the family to recover , Horatio arranged a trip to Europe for all the family, and to accompany and assist Moody and Sankey in their work. A problem with his business prevented Horatio from travelling with his family - he was to join them later. The passenger ship with his wife and 4 daughters on board collided with another vessel and sank. His wife survived but not so the children.

Horatio set sail as soon as was possible to join his wife who was now in Cardiff. When his ship was over the place where it was believed that his children had lost their lives, he wrote this inspirational hymn:

“When peace like a river attendeth my way.  
When sorrows like sea billows roll.

Image public domain, via Wikimedia<sup>1</sup>



Image public domain, via Wikimedia Commons<sup>2</sup>



*Horatio Spafford and his wife, Anna*

Whatever my lot , Thou hast taught me to say.  
It is well, it is well with my soul.“ (3 more verses.)

Horatio and Anna returned to Chicago and had a further 3 children. Their eldest, a son, died aged 4 as had his brother before him. The following year, the family left for Israel, settling in the old part of Jerusalem. There they ministered to the poor, sick and homeless and their work became the subject of a Nobel prize winning novel years later, ‘Jerusalem’ written by Selma Lagerlof. 1901.

Horatio’s story is an example of truly inspiring faith in the Lord. Perhaps that is why this hymn like no other demonstrates the power our God has to comfort our weary souls when the darkest tragedies overtake us. Our God will see us through any storm.

Anne Rigby (Pastoral Assistant)

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<sup>1</sup>[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/Horatio\\_Spafford.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8e/Horatio_Spafford.jpg);

<sup>2</sup>[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Anna\\_Spafford.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Anna_Spafford.jpg)

## Third Sunday in Lent

As the days are gradually becoming lighter, in many households it is a time for spring cleaning! Today we have arrived at the third Sunday of Lent and our Gospel reading from John 2:13-22 has this as part of its theme. It is the account of Jesus entering the temple courtyard where he found money changers, and traders selling cattle, sheep and doves. This was allowed by the temple authorities since the animals were for Jews coming to make sacrificial offerings, indeed Mary and Joseph would have come thirty years earlier with their firstborn for the act of purification. We know that since only temple money could be used, the normal currency had to be changed but it is likely that the traders and money changers were taking advantage of their privileged position. However whatever may have been permitted, these practices and their location within the temple enclosure were clearly not God's intention. The Jews asked Jesus "What sign can you show us for doing these things?" and he replied, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. They were astounded by this reply. "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" they retort! But as John explains, Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body.

The passage concludes, *"When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken."*

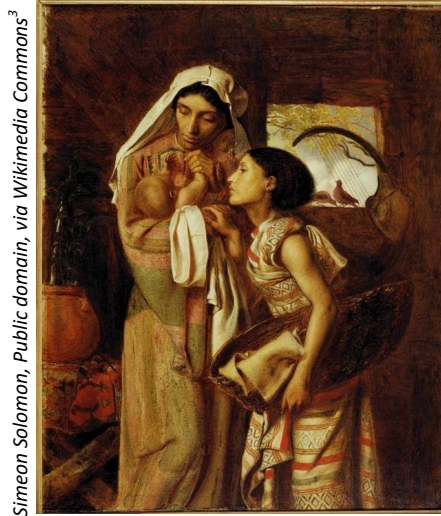
In John's account, unlike those of the Synoptic writers, Jesus doesn't say: "It's a house of prayer." And he doesn't say they are "robbers." Instead he focuses on the misuse of the temple court....."Do not make my Father's house a house of trade or a marketplace." When the disciples saw how Jesus was filled with anger they would no doubt have connected it with Psalm 69 where King David says, "Zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me." And so it is clear that John is particularly keen to make his readers aware of the importance of worshiping and knowing God the Father, and of respecting and treasuring without question that relationship which their Lord and Saviour had sanctified and demonstrated by his actions.

John may also have been referencing the prophecy in Malachi, that the messenger of the Lord would suddenly come into his temple like a refiner's fire. There would be a replacement of the old order with the new.

*Heavenly Father, help me to recognize you when your time comes and may the inner courts of my life be ready for you. Amen*

Rev John Hillier

## Mothering Sunday – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March



*The Mother of Moses (Simeon Solomon)*  
(Delaware Art Museum)

### Exodus 2.1-10: Letting Go and Lifting Up

When Moses' mother, Jochebed, coated the papyrus basket with tar, placed her son in it and sent him down the River Nile, she had no idea what would happen. Would someone find him? And if so, who? Would it be someone who would care for him as she had? Or would it be someone who wished him harm - one of Pharaoh's people who would carry out the orders to kill the child?

Further down river, Pharaoh's daughter also faces a decision. Having discovered the basket caught amongst the reeds and sent her servant to retrieve it, she must determine what to do. Surprisingly, despite discovering the Hebrew baby inside, she chose to have pity; to lift up the baby from the river and to look after his needs.

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<sup>3</sup>[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Simeon\\_Solomon\\_\\_The\\_Mother\\_of\\_Moses.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9f/Simeon_Solomon__The_Mother_of_Moses.jpg)



Both women had to make a choice which was grounded in trust. One chooses to let go of the most precious thing she knew, trusting in God to keep it safe for her. The other, even in the face of entrenched prejudice and going against what she knows are her father's wishes, chooses to lift up this child in need.

Letting go of someone you love and entrusting them to someone else is possibly one of the hardest things any of us has to do. During this pandemic, we have had to do that more than usual, whether it is entrusting an elderly parent to a care home we haven't been able to visit in person; or taking a sick relative to the hospital, knowing that we cannot visit; or watching a newly adult child leave to go to university and/or a job in a different city. Entrusting always carries a risk, but knowing when to let go is a fundamental part of not just caring for people we love, but also projects and activities we love. And, as the experience of Moses' family goes to show, letting go can lead to new opportunities. Moses' future as a leader of his people, was started the day his Mother let go and trusted him into God's care.

Often, as we let go of one thing, we find we are able to move forward and, in doing so, we discover space in our lives for new opportunities.

As we continue our journey through Lent, perhaps now is a good time to consider what we each need to let go of. None, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

- Are there things in your life today that you are holding on to?
- Could they instead be entrusted to someone else?
- As you let go of that one thing, is there something else you are being called to lift up?

Rev Chris Campbell

## Fifth Sunday of Lent

(John 12: 20-32)

Picture the scene, you're Philip or Andrew, a disciple of Jesus, and you've just arrived with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The air buzzes with excitement and chatter about this man they call the messiah. People are coming to see and listen to Him, it's working, everything He's said is happening, people are drawn to Him, the excitement is almost too much to bear and then He says ... the time has come for Him to die: *"The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."* (v 23). Well, that killed the party! For goodness' sake, why is He saying this? Everything's going so well!

Jesus' response is showing that Philip and Andrew have lost sight of the scope of God's work, and the way God works in the world, as we so often do. Andrew and Philip are so caught up in the excitement of Jesus' foretelling's coming to fruition that they've forgotten the purpose of all of Jesus' teachings. We too so often lose sight of God and fail to keep our focus on Him. We get caught up in the excitement of new clothes, a new phone, that lovely car we're hoping we can buy. The City of Man takes over the City of God.

Jesus goes on to say *"Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit"* (v 24). Jesus is teaching that God works through death and resurrection. For our people to thrive, death must happen. Jesus must die for our sins, and for us to live with God's grace, and if we keep Jesus and God in our life and as our focus we will thrive.

If Jesus had not gone to the cross, his life would have counted for nothing. If Jesus hadn't died on the cross, his life would be a footnote in history. Jesus says that if he didn't die, his life wouldn't have accomplished its purpose. He would have failed in his mission and his life would have had very limited impact. There would not be millions of people around the world who have been completely changed by him. The reason that Jesus is compelling is not because of what he accomplished in his life, as great a life as it was; it's because of what he accomplished by his death.

Sian Binley – Pioneer ALM

# Palm Sunday

(Mark 11.1–11)



Photos by Christian Hess Arava and Bekky Bekks on [www.unsplash.com](http://www.unsplash.com)

*Hosanna in the highest heaven!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*

‘Mum, Mum, I’ve had such an exciting day; my ears are still ringing from all the noise – “Hosanna in the highest”.’

‘Tell me about it; I’ve missed you.’

‘Those men, who asked to borrow me, took me to that preacher man, Jesus. They put their cloaks on my back and Jesus asked me to carry him into Jerusalem.’

‘Wow, what an important job!’

‘Was it? I felt very small amongst the huge number of people crowding round us, cheering and waving palm branches, which scratched my nose. But Jesus just stroked me occasionally, like you nuzzle me, to reassure me everything’s OK.’

‘Everyone must have been happy to see Jesus.’

‘Well, I’m not sure. The children loved it because their parents were distracted and they could run around everywhere! I think Jesus’ friends may have been a bit confused. The crowd got excited seeing him riding on me, because kings ride into cities, so he must be very special. But, I had a

feeling some people didn't like seeing that. They were wishing I was a war horse, and Jesus had come to form an army and overthrow the Romans. Some others were relieved I was just a small donkey, they were getting worried that the crowd would side with Jesus and revolt against them.'

'How far did you go?'

'We went right up to the Temple: it was mayhem! When Jesus slid off me he came and looked into my eyes. It felt like he could see right inside me, it made me feel very special.'

'You are special sweetheart.'

'I know you think so Mum, but this was a different sort of special, almost as if he was pouring something warm inside me. Do you think I'll see him again?'

'I don't know. You might do.'

'Well, it doesn't matter, Mum, because wherever I go I will still feel I am carrying Jesus with me.'

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This week, beginning with Palm Sunday, if you have a day where you feel you are insignificant, just plodding along in your normal (or, at the moment, not so normal) routine, or waiting to be 'let out': remember, you too are carrying the Saviour of the World.

You can carry Jesus with you into all the places you go (when you can!), and to all the people you talk to (in whatever way), and to all those people and places in your prayers. There may be many different reactions, as there were for Jesus. You too may find you travel to tough places, but you will be carrying Jesus' love and hope with you.

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do.*

*[Edwin Hatch, 1878]  
Canon Kate Aylmer*

## Monday in Holy Week

Luke 22: 39-46 : Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives

(Mt 26:36–46; Mk 14:32–42; Jn 18:1)

*39 He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. 40 When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." 41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." [[43 Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. 44 In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.] 45 When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, 46 and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."*

Following the events of the last supper Luke turns his narrative to focus solely upon Jesus. This moment is poignant. Up to this point the story of Jesus as told by Luke has focused either on Jesus' interaction with others or upon his teachings. In this moment all is stripped away, it is a picture of Jesus beyond the veil, behind the scenes.

It is also during Jesus' moment of greatest weakness that Luke decides to do this, almost as if by doing this Luke desires to emphasise the vulnerability of Jesus at this point in his earthly mission. The vulnerability and weakness that we find in this passage reflects how deeply the son of God chose to take on our humanity. Jesus the man, the true image of the incarnation, here reflects the totality of human nature. John of the Damascus emphasises the importance of this, stating that it was as the Son of Man AND the Son of God that Jesus chooses to drink the cup.

Ultimately strength is found through Jesus' subordination to the divine plan of the Father. We see within this passage what we have seen throughout the entirety of the gospel, the will of the Son aligning with the will of the Father. Gregory of Nazianzus reminds us that even in the moments of pain, of anguish, of vulnerability and weakness Jesus' desire remains to be doing the will of the Father in heaven. Jesus knew what was at stake, he knew the path of love.

The moment that this passage captures shows us the strength that can be found in weakness, when we follow our Lord in stepping out ahead of our weaknesses and push on towards the goal of our life, to do the will of the Father. We do not have the same path as Jesus, his was a unique mission on earth. But we do have the same calling, to declare the coming of the kingdom of heaven, to carry out the will of the Father and to subject ourselves to that will even when the path is hard. If we are able to do that, then our weakness becomes our strength.

Tom Owen, Ordinand

## Tuesday in Holy Week

Luke 22: 47-53 – The betrayal and arrest of Jesus

(Mt 26:47–56; Mk 14:43–52; Jn 18:1–11)

*47 While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; 48 but Jesus said to him, “Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?” 49 When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, “Lord, should we strike with the sword?” 50 Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, “No more of this!” And he touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? 53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!”*

The moment of Jesus’ Passion has arrived, soon he will be taken from his place of solitude and brought before a crowd. Previously crowds had laid palms by his feet and shouted ‘Hosanna’, now they were gunning for his blood. This imagery reflects two kingdoms, the triumphant entry symbolising the celebration of the Kingdom of Heaven, the jeering crowds to come, the kingdom of the world. Here, in this space in the garden, Jesus waits in anguish for the present moment, for his betrayal, not only from his disciple and friend, but also the self-same crowd who had welcomed him days before.

Luke, in this passage on the betrayal and arrest of Jesus again brings into focus these two kingdoms. He does this by emphasising the different ways in which they deal with power. The kingdom of man is brought into this moment brandishing swords and clubs, symbols of violence and oppression by which mankind has always brandished power. We see also through the interactions between the disciples and the guards this notion of war and violence being painfully played out. We must not overlook the significance of this interaction as it speaks to the frailty of humanity in times of danger and vulnerability. A disciple, one who had walked with Jesus, learned his teachings. Yet in his moment of frailty, he adopted the position of a citizen

of this world, rather than the kingdom of heaven. Often it is our actions in the moments of vulnerability that reveals who we really are.

Jesus, however, presents to us another way in which we can choose to live. Luke presents Jesus as the antithesis of the previous interaction. A man quietly resolved to the will of the Father brings himself forward in peace to hand himself over to his oppressors. Luke presents Jesus in this moment as the symbol of His Kingdom in Heaven. In his final act before his captivity Jesus presents the mission of this heavenly Kingdom through the healing of the soldier's ear. Cyril of Alexandria reflects these contrasting views stating that the Lord chose "love rather than the sword and healing rather than violence." With this Jesus presents to us the pattern of the kingdom and a model for his followers to follow.

Tom Owen, Ordinand



## Wednesday in Holy Week

Luke 22. 54-62: Peter denies Jesus



*St Peter's Denial (Rembrandt )  
(Rijksmuseum)*

*'The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times."' (Luke 22.61)*

It is one of the most poignant and sad moments in Holy Week, when Simon Peter – as Jesus predicted – wilfully denies knowing Jesus. It is difficult for us to imagine the heat of the moment, with Jesus gradually being isolated and scapegoated (he has already been arrested), and the risk posed not only to Jesus, but to all his disciples. Nonetheless it is shocking that Peter, Jesus' intimate friend and disciple, who has been alongside him these past three years, now denies knowing Jesus – such is his fear and trepidation. It is a moment from which Peter will always recoil, when he remembers his tragic failure of loyalty to his Lord, at this dark hour.

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<sup>4</sup>[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8f/Rembrandt\\_The-denial-of-peter-1660.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8f/Rembrandt_The-denial-of-peter-1660.jpg)

But the reality is, of course, that all of us, in different ways, at different times, enact the same disloyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ; and we too, when our unloving acts are revealed to us, recoil in shame and dismay. It may be that we, in times of moral weakness, deny being Christian or fail to stand up for Jesus in a conversation at work. Or it could be that when the going gets tough and life is hard – as with the present pandemic – we hide away as Christians, so people don't identify us as believers. Or, in times of sin and temptation, we deny being followers of the Christ by our actions. The good news, however, is that Jesus forgives us, although he also challenges us – as he did Peter, after the resurrection – to 'feed my sheep', in other words to care for other people, God's children.

Let us end today's reflection with a prayer that we might repent and turn back to Jesus Christ, in times of weakness, trial or temptation:

*'Lord Jesus, forgive us for failing you, as even the disciples did. Through thoughtlessness we betray you, through fear we run away from you; through cowardice we deny you, not wanting people to know that we are your followers. Have mercy on us, as you had mercy on Peter, and when the cock crows in our hearts, and we realise what we have done, help us to bear the gaze of your love. Amen.'*

Rev James Shakespeare

## Maundy Thursday

John 13:1-17, 31-35, Luke 22:14-23; c.f. Matthew 3:13-17;  
Philippians 2:5-11.

*"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." - John 13:34 (NRSV)*

There are many titles we can use to describe our Saviour, Jesus Christ. To name a few, we may call Him Lord; the Messiah; Teacher; Healer; Emmanuel, or God-with-us; Cornerstone; the Son of Man; the Son of God; Servant; King; and, of course, the Servant King.

All of these titles are fitting and correct, and some of these are actively used by Jesus (or those in His presence) in the Gospels. But perhaps one of the most striking titles – which is most fitting for today especially – is how Jesus is the Servant King.

'The Servant King' is the title of one of my favourite worship songs; upon my request, it was sung at my Confirmation in 2005. Jesus Christ is the Servant King – the King who came to be Servant of all – and we vividly see and experience this on Maundy Thursday.

Maundy Thursday is the day when Jesus Christ is betrayed into the hands of sinners – the betrayal which leads on to the remainder of His passion, His death, and His resurrection. He is preparing for this – He is the Paschal Lamb, crucified and exalted at the Passover.

On Maundy Thursday, we commemorate two of the most humble yet powerful actions of Jesus Christ, His washing of the disciples' feet, and His institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Jesus, the King of Glory, stoops down low to wash His disciples' feet – a scene in which we see the Son of God serving all, in the most humble form. This remarkable humility is what St Paul speaks of in his Letter to the Philippians – Christ did not regard His divine identity as something to be exploited, but took the form of a servant and humbled Himself. Indeed, Peter is initially shocked when Christ does this – shocked in a way not dissimilar to John the Baptist, when Jesus asks to be baptised by him – but, when Christ explains why He is doing this, the Servant King continues with glorious authority.

On the same day, Jesus celebrates the Passover with His friends – and institutes the Eucharist. Once again, we see the Servant King's pure love and self-giving, Himself bringing us back to God. Every time we meet for Holy Communion – be it in Church, or at home by making an Act of Spiritual Communion – we participate in the one perfect Sacrifice of the Eucharist, as first instituted by Jesus Christ that first Maundy Thursday, in remembrance of Him and in unity with Him.

Another favourite hymn of mine is '*Brother, Sister, Let Me Serve You*'. Whatever context we are in, I believe this is something we can always do, wherever we are. How best might you today imitate the love and example of Jesus Christ, the Servant King, to those around us?

Will Lyon Tupman – Ordinand

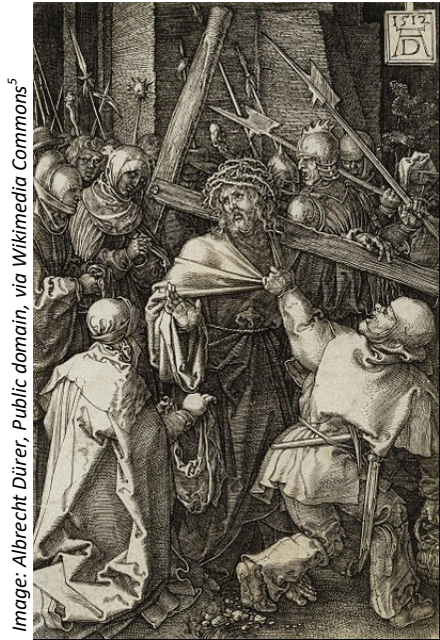
## Reflection for Good Friday

Isaiah 52.13-53.13, the Suffering Servant

*'Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions... Upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.'* (Isaiah 53.4-5)

Today we come to the heart of Holy Week, to the action of God, in his Beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our world, and indeed for the reconciliation of the whole cosmos. St John attempts to fathom the mystery, that the eternal Word, through whom God created the world, now flesh in Jesus Christ, actually dies at the heart of sinful humanity. Yes, we believe, as Jurgen Moltmann put it in his book, in a 'crucified God'. Today we watch and wait, in horror and grief, as the Lord of life is tortured and crucified, a most cruel and terrible death... hoping, against hope, for resurrection, that (as John 1 put it) 'the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.' And, for many Christians, our reflections turn not only to the Passion Narratives in the four Gospels, but to the prophet words of the Book of Isaiah, the final Servant Song, this time dwelling on his suffering.

It is worth noting that originally, for the Jewish people – before Christ – this text was taken as relating either to an individual, destined to come, or for



*Bearing of the Cross (Albrecht Dürer)  
(Museum of Fine Arts, Houston)*

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<sup>5</sup>[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/57/Albrecht\\_D%C3%BCrер\\_-\\_Bearing\\_of\\_the\\_Cross\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/57/Albrecht_D%C3%BCrер_-_Bearing_of_the_Cross_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

the fate of the Jewish people as a whole. Nonetheless the New Testament rightly applies it to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, 'for us and for our salvation'.

However we understand the theology of Jesus' death – what theologians term the 'atonement' or the 'saving work of Christ on the cross' – it is clear that Jesus dies for his people, and so, mysteriously reconciles them back to God. Various theories of atonement are put forward in Christian theology: principally the Cross as sacrifice (as is evident in the Isaiah text above), the Cross as victory, the Cross as means of forgiveness of sins, and the Cross as moral example. But what matters today, beyond all doctrine, is simply that we 'stay with him', watch and wait, and pray, in sadness and devotion to our Lord; perhaps also in solidarity with all who suffer today, especially victims of religious persecution, prisoners of conscience, and victims of oppression. May we be strengthened in faith and devotion to our Lord, and renewed by his saving death and passion.

A prayer written by young people in Kenya:

*'Blessed be Jesus who died to save us. Blessed be Jesus, who had compassion on us. Blessed be Jesus, who suffered loneliness, rejection and pain, for our sakes. Blessed be Jesus, through whose cross I am forgiven. Lord Jesus, deepen my understanding of your suffering and death. Amen'*

Rev James Shakespeare

## Holy Saturday

Matthew 27:57-end; c.f. John 19:38-end; Matthew 28; John 11:25-26.

*“Crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven.”* - The Apostles' Creed.

*“I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”* - Jesus, in John 11:25-26 (NRSV)

The Easter Triduum – that is, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil with Easter Day – is, along with Christmas, the most important time of the Liturgical Year. It tells the story of Jesus Christ's passion, death and resurrection; His redemption of humanity, and His reconciling of us with God, Himself being God with us. But within the Easter Triduum, there is another very important day, which is often less thought about – Holy Saturday. Is there a tendency to neglect Holy Saturday? What exactly is Holy Saturday?

Holy Saturday is the full and complete day in which Jesus Christ was dead. St Matthew's Gospel details the commissioning of the soldiers to secure the tomb, making it as secure as possible so that the body of Christ could not be stolen. Whether these were Roman soldiers or the Temple Guard, they would have very strictly enforced this; neither group would have wanted any more drama to unfold about the Messiah. And yet, on Easter Day, the tomb was indeed found to be empty – as discovered by the women, the other disciples, and the shocked guards who could only watch in amazement as an angel rolled the stone away. The risen Christ, who would later pass through locked doors, had passed through the tomb – and, in accordance with the Scriptures, had risen from the dead.

But what actually happened beforehand, on that first Holy Saturday? On Holy Saturday comes the Harrowing of Hell, the vital hinge-point between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Jesus Christ Himself rescues His people from

Hell – powerfully lifting them out, as many icons and other artistic representations depict. In the Harrowing of Hell, Jesus defeats the power of death – and even death itself – leading His people on to share in His resurrection.

It had to be Jesus Christ who did this. Only God has the power to defeat death; Jesus, being the second Person of the Trinity, is fully divine – so has the power to do this. Jesus, being Incarnate and fully human, can effect this for us. As baptised siblings in Christ, we are baptised into His death; and likewise, we are also baptised into His resurrection.

*Lord Jesus, we thank you for your blessed passion, death and resurrection; your loving self-giving to free us from our sins. As your siblings in the world today, we pray that we may always seek to love and serve you, the Servant King, and all people who we meet in our thoughts, words and deeds, proclaiming your Good News throughout our lives. Amen.*

Will Lyon Tupman – Ordinand



## Easter Day



Image: Getty Center, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons<sup>6</sup>

*St Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre*  
(Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo)  
(Getty Center)

John 20.1-18: Early in the morning

*“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb” John 20.1*

During the periods of lockdown over the last year, I have got even more used to rising early. Along with many parents of school-aged children, home-schooling during the pandemic, I have struggled to find times for peaceful working without their (smiling, enthusiastic, but sometimes frustrating) interruptions. And so I have often found myself rising, whilst it is still dark, to begin the day.

Perhaps this is why, when I reread this very familiar passage today, I was drawn to that first line and how Mary came to the tomb in darkness. In

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<sup>6</sup>[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/00/Giovanni\\_Girolamo\\_Savoldo\\_%28Italian\\_%28Lombard%29%2C\\_active\\_about\\_1480\\_-\\_after\\_1548%29\\_-\\_Saint\\_Mary\\_Magdalene\\_at\\_the\\_Sepulchre\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/00/Giovanni_Girolamo_Savoldo_%28Italian_%28Lombard%29%2C_active_about_1480_-_after_1548%29_-_Saint_Mary_Magdalene_at_the_Sepulchre_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

Matthew and Luke, the women come at dawn. In Mark it is just after sunrise. Only in John does the approach to the tomb happen in darkness. Likewise, only in John does Mary Magdalene come alone.

Maybe, like many of us lately, Mary had been unable to sleep. Maybe, after a restless night she had finally given up, and left the bed in which she had been tossing and turning, to come to the tomb. Maybe she needed to be there first, before anyone else, to spend time alone with her sorrow. Or maybe, like my early rising, she simply knew there was much to do on that first day of a new week and she wanted to make a start on getting the jobs done.

I imagine it remains dark as Mary makes her discovery that the tomb is empty, and as she hurries off to find Simon Peter. It remains dark too as Simon Peter and the disciple who Jesus loved, make their own race to the place and discover the strips of cloth and the linen. And it remains dark as those two disciples return to where they are staying; apparently seeing and believing but still not *understanding that Jesus had risen*.

I imagine then that the light only begins to dawn when, finally, the man who Mary had assumed was the gardener calls her name: 'Mary'. As Jesus says Mary's name, her eyes are opened and the light comes rushing in. Jesus who was, and is, and always will be the light shining in the darkness, was there before her.

There have been times during this pandemic when the world has seemed very dark, and during winter I remember the countless days that seemed to remain a foggy grey; as if life itself had been drained from the world. But the Good News of Easter is that Christ, the Light of the World, has overcome the darkness. Even when we, like those first disciples, are filled with sorrow and confusion, we can take comfort that Christ calls our names too and that our risen Lord has the power to cast out all our fear and to renew our sense of hope and calling.

With a renewed sense of optimism, Mary was commissioned to go to the others and tell them the good news that she had heard. This Easter, we too are called to live as people of the light and to share that good news that the darkness can never overcome the light. Alleluia.

Rev Chris Campbell

## Easter Monday

*'Christ is Risen!*

*There's ecstasy for a moment, sheer, wild, abandoned ecstasy.*

*And then we have a Bank Holiday.'* John Pritchard

*'If anyone is in Christ there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!'* 2 Corinthians 5:17

*'Let him Easter in us.'* Gerard Manley Hopkins

After Christmas there come the 12 days of Christmas that take us to Epiphany. We continue eating, seeing relatives and friends, partying at New Year and celebrating the birth of the Christ child (or using his birth as an excuse for further celebration) until our Christmas trees come down either for Epiphany or at a stretch at Candlemas. Whether or not you believe, there is something about Christmas that touches us all. But Easter has a dramatic, often prayerful, reflective, faith-filled build up in Lent; a weekend of extreme emotions with the despair and anguish of Good Friday, the flat silence of Holy Saturday, the exuberant joy of Easter Sunday – and then it's over. But without Easter there would be no Christmas.

Easter is the most profound event in the Christian church year. It is the reason for our faith. It is the cornerstone of Christianity. The events that occurred after Jesus was left for dead in his cold tomb changed the world, changed the people who witnessed it, and established a new religion - but maybe we have forgotten that they change us.

Easter is a bit too hard. Sometimes we don't know how to talk about it. Because you can't have Easter Sunday without Good Friday, and Good Friday is not something that you can explain easily. It's not a fun story: it's got blood and guts and gore and earthquakes and a lot of baddies. A journey to the empty tomb is not like a journey to the manger. There is no new-born with his adoring mother. No angels. Just an absence.

Most of us love Spring - flowers in the garden, Easter bunnies and chicks. Maybe we love it because it gives us a sense of hope, the promise of new life, the return of summer. But all this newness is not really new – it is the

cycle of nature: death, winter, birth, spring. After these births death comes again. And this is one of the problems of Easter – that to deal with the harsh reality of Easter we associate this cycle with the new life of Christ. When Jesus rose to life, he did not die again. Jesus will never die again. Jesus rising again is what makes us fully human, fully alive. 'Christ has met, fought and beaten the King of Death. Everything is different because he has done so.' (C.S. Lewis). Believing in the resurrection should change not only how we see the world but how we live in the world. We need to become people in whom others can see new life.

*Jesus, risen and let loose in the world,  
You come to us even in our darkness and doubt  
With words of invitation and welcome.  
Continue to reveal yourself to us when doubt is strong and darkness deep  
And in your mercy draw us to safe ground, by the fearless light of truth.  
Amen.*

Lucy Holden

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