



St George's Church Lent Blog 2009

The Lent Journey.

Each day during Lent, the congregation added a thought, prayer or other contribution.

And so..... the congregation journeyed through Lent together.

25th February 2009

Rev Hilary Fife

Ashing

Light as a feather
A finger touched me,
Branded me cross-shaped,
Smudged me with ash.
Light as a feather
God's finger caressed me
with sign of forgiveness,
Marked me with love.
Light as a feather
Penitent, shriven
Signed with his life-mark
I go on my way.

Ann Lewin

This year the words of one of a much loved priest friend's sermons came to mind:
'Enjoy Lent – fatten yourself up for Easter!' (spiritually that is).



26th February 2009

Alison McHugh

On God and dogs.

If dogs could talk what would they say?

I love sitting by my master, resting, relaxing leaning into the warmth and comfort of his body feeling his strong hands gently stroke me.

I often go off exploring this wonderful world so full of delights and new experiences but whenever my master calls my name I quickly return, eager to share what I have discovered.

Sometimes the delights of the world are too much and when my master calls I decide not to listen. He never stops calling me, knowing that before long I will get into trouble and need his help. When I do decide to turn and return to him he is there, not with words of judgement but with a loving smile ready to welcome me back.

My master provides me with all manner of good things

God longs for us to have this trust and faith in Him as Master.

Comments:

That is a very vivid analogy for me Alison. I think dogs -like children- and adults alike- mean well but are easily lead astray - but knowing that there is a loving God ever ready, willing and wanting to forgive and loving us unconditionally is a very comforting truth. I thought that the above expressed this facet of God really well and simply- so that even my children, Luke and Tom could understand it. Thanks.

Tanya White – 17th March 2009

27th February 2009

Carol Frost

A Good Job

WANTED

Applicants for positions of great responsibility

After a period of intensive training you will be expected to be capable of influencing large numbers of people to completely change their lifestyle for a different way of thinking and behaving towards others.

Conditions of service:

Poor. Food and lodgings not guaranteed - these will rely solely on the generosity of the people you meet. You will receive no pay for this work. This job necessitates leaving your current occupation, family, friends and your home in order to wander around the country for about 3 years talking to people who may, or may not want to listen to you. During this time, you will receive your training, apprenticed to a highly experienced, knowledgeable and skilled Tutor. He will explain what it is you have to do as you wander around with Him, attempting to follow His example.

After this period of training and field work, you will be expected to be able to lead, heal and encourage people as they try to live out their new lifestyle. You will need stamina, fortitude, large amounts of faith and the will to carry on with this task for the rest of your life, in the face of opposition, punishment and the possibility of being tortured, imprisoned and even killed.

Number of posts available:

Initially 12, but with the assurance that ample positions of a similar nature will be available in the future.

If you were offered this job, would you accept it?

This Lent, let us give thanks that there were some people who did!

28th February 2009

Fay Westray

Grace

The following is taken as an extract from an excellent book - What's so Amazing about Grace? by Philip Yancey.

The gospel is not at all what we would come up with on our own... Throughout the Bible, in fact, God shows a marked preference for "real" people over "good" people....

In one of his last acts before death, Jesus forgave a thief dangling on a cross, knowing full well the thief had converted out of plain fear. That thief would never study the bible, never attend synagogue or church and never make amends to all those he had wronged. He simply said "Jesus, remember me." And Jesus promised, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." It's another shocking reminder that grace does not depend on what we have done for God but rather what God has done for us.

Ask people what they must do to get to heaven and most reply, "Be good." Jesus stories contradict that answer. All we must do is cry, "Help!" God welcomes home anyone who will have him and, in fact, has made the first move already....

.....As Soren Kierkegaard put it,

"When it is a question of a sinner He does not merely stand still, open his arms and say, "Come hither"; no, He stands there and waits, as the father of the lost son waited, rather He does not stand and wait, He goes forth to seek, as the shepherd sought the lost sheep, as the woman sought the lost coin. He goes – yet no, He has gone, but infinitely farther than any shepherd or any woman, He went, in sooth, the infinitely long way from being God to becoming man, and that way He went in search of sinners."

1st March 2009

Alyssa Carey

What is Lent?

I wasn't sure what to do for this blog, so I decided to ask my friends/teachers what Lent means to them/what they believe lent is. Here are their views:

Lent is taking time to pray, giving up certian things and doing something special for God- Form Tutor

About thinking how Jesus was tempted in the desert by the devil and how he died for us - Friend

A time when people give things up - Friend

Giving things up and getting ready for Easter - Friend

I'm not really too bothered about Lent, it doesn't really mean anything to me even though I am a Christian - Friend

A time when we give ourselves up to God and focus on him more. Also it is a time for preparation - Form Tutor

To me, Lent is a time to give up things that are in our daily lives, to remember Jesus's time in the desert and how he was tempted by the devil.

And how we give you thanks because through him you have given us the spirit of discipline, that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace - From the Alterative Service Book.

2nd March 2009

Brian McGinnis

Travelling Hopefully

The theme of this Lent exchange of words and pictures is Journeying/Travelling. It is an odd theme in some ways, because both churches and the Christians who attend them get, in some quarters, a reputation for staying put and resisting change. But we are pilgrim members of a pilgrim church. Being a pilgrim means travelling - purposefully and hopefully. If we aren't travelling, we shouldn't belong; and if the church is isn't travelling, it should shut shop and leave the space for something more useful. Change for change's sake is not a Jesus requirement. Change for God's sake is. That is how the Christian Church began: with people who had the world's richest tradition of religious literature, personal encounter with God, and God-centred living - following in the steps of those great travellers Abraham and Moses. They, as St Paul expressed it, had to decide what to carry forward and build on, and what to leave behind, as they began the Jesus journey. We have a 2000 year old Christian inheritance, and the same challenge to decide what we keep and build on and what we abandon in our personal and collective pilgrimage. Lent is always a good time to think about where we go next - whether we are 7, 17, 70, or 97. Travelling hopefully is not a monopoly of the young. Christian history sparkles with (and because of) elderly travellers. After all, we have a joyful eternity before us.



3rd March 2009

Alice Barker

How True is the Claim That God Lives Above?

How true is the claim that God lives above?

For we see torture and pain on this earth

What evidence do we have of his love?

But Jesus Christ's own life, death and sweet birth

We see death, destruction and sorrow live

And fear in the eyes of those who have seen

But for these torments they always forgive

For great things they say have happened and been

There is no proof of God but our belief

And our time spent waiting for joy and peace

Although this world faces much hurt and grief

Eventually this anguish will cease

A free gift from God this action will be

The believers' reward is heaven's key.

4th March 2009

Stu Carey

Lent Hymns

As I'm a member of the choir, I thought I'd let some verses of some of my favourite Hymns for this season say how I feel about Lent and Easter :-

"According to thy Gracious Word" (vs 1,5,6)

According to thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember thee.

Remember thee, and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember thee.

And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and memory flee,
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesu, remember me.

James Montgomery 1771-1854

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (last verse).

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts 1674-1748

And lastly, the Hymn that really sums it all up for me, especially this last verse...

"My Song is Love Unknown"

Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like thine.
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Could gladly spend.

Samuel Crossman 1624-83

5th March 2009

Paul Deacon

A Memo from God

To: You

From: The Boss

Date: Today

Subject: Yourself

Ref: LIFE

I am God. Today I will be handling all of your problems. Please remember that I do not need your help.

If life happens to deliver a situation to you that you cannot handle, do not attempt to resolve it. Kindly put it in the SFGTD (something for God to do) box.

All situations will be resolved, but in my time, not yours.

Once the matter is placed into the box, do not hold onto it by worrying about it. Instead, focus on all the wonderful things that are present in your life now.



6th March 2009

Tony Aufenast

Spring Cleaning

During his ministry Jesus provided both practical and spiritual advice.

Lent is a time for spring-cleaning lives, as well as homes. When we spring clean our homes we pay particular attention to all areas. We can spring clean our lives with the same care through prayer, worship and regular bible reading.

Our finances need attention as does our spiritual lives and we should be thankful that the Government has guaranteed our bank balances to £50,000 if the Bank we use fails and shares values will go back up, but perhaps not to the level they were before.

We can be certain that our Father cares about the state of our spiritual and financial lives. We can put our trust in God.

Lord help us make Lent special and use all the gifts that we have been given for good.

Amen

7th March 2009

Theo Clayton

I wasn't too sure about what to write for this blog, So far everyone has written very deep and meaningful thoughts.

Lent for me is really a time of waiting for Easter to come, the church is bare – no silver candlesticks - even the silver cross is missing. But you can't have Easter without going through Lent – it's a time of preparation and thinking what Jesus suffered for all of us – and what a great deal we have to be thankful for.

Comments

Only Theo has tempted me into a response! He makes a very interesting point about whether Lent is mainly being without - the negatives of no flowers, no silver, and no (whatever it is we have personally decided to do without). As Theo wisely says, it is more about being with/travelling with Jesus on his (and our) pathway to Good Friday and Easter. The only point of the doing without is to sharpen up the being with. Lent is essentially positive, because, as Theo says, we have so much to be thankful for.
Brian McGinnis 7th March 09

8th March 2009

Ray Wheeler

The Westcott Icon – “I Have Chosen You”

About three years ago the students of Westcott House, a Church of England theological college in Cambridge, produced a CD entitled Glimpses of God – Reflections in Words and Music. The CD is about the different ways people encounter God. Ten students training for ordination describe their experiences - some joyful, some painful – but in their own words reflect on the surprising things they have learnt about God and themselves. Each spoken piece is followed by an excerpt of music.

Inside the sleeve note accompanying the CD there is a reproduction of The Westcott Icon of Christ written in 1981 which hangs in the college chapel. Even in the sleeve note illustration I can see that Jesus is looking at me yet appears to look straight through and beyond: beyond to what he sees of me and the profound love that he has of me. Jesus is holding in his left hand the Gospel book. His right hand is pointing to the text from St John’s Gospel Chapter 15 verse 16: “Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you.”

These words particularly speak to me as I make sense of my calling, firstly as a Christian, and secondly as a Reader and in my role as Registrar of Readers in Southwark Diocese. When things go wrong or I run out of time or say the wrong word and feel that I want to give everything up, these words spoken by Jesus keep me going and give me affirmation. In the icon Jesus looks through me and sees through all the doubts and insecurities. As we all struggle to live out the Christian life in our modern and muddled world it is so easy to let the doubts creep in (doubts – our own temptation in the wilderness) but here are the words to remind us all as Christians that we have been called to follow him in whatever way we have been chosen to serve God.

For a short description of the Westcott Icon by Archbishop Rowan Williams click on to the following link: <http://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/worship/theicon.html>

PS An icon is ‘written’ not painted.

9th March 2009

Rev Carol Jones

Travelling

We travel Lent with our LORD but surely it is a time to travel our own journey.

To look at ourselves and where what has changed since last Lent.

For me it is about the things I promised that seemed to have slipped through the net.

The wonderful thing is that God accepts my shortcomings and then encourages me to keep going.

How about you? He never gives up on us does he?

10th March 2009

Penny Bloss

Thoughts

Today I went to a house lent group which for each week of lent is showing a film set in Poland .Each has one of the ten commandments as its title. The films depict a depressing bleak landscape but each story is compelling and draws you into its spell almost as if hypnotised. Today was a moral maze of dilemmas, an elderly doctor lives in the same block of flats as the wife of one of his patients who is seriously ill. She wants him to tell her how ill is her husband and will he die? Parallel to this, the doctor is seen drinking coffee with his housekeeper telling her what seems at first a disjointed story about a baby and a mother and a grandad. Gradually you realise he is talking about his own family which he describes as talking to at 11pm and leaving the hospital and returning home just after midnight to find only a hole where his house once was. Bombed. Where on earth is this leading, one asks one self? The wife and the doctor relationship develops and she tells him she is 3 months pregnant and that it's not her husband's. She loves her husband very much and that if he dies she will have the baby but if he lives then she will abort the baby. She also says she is loves the father of her baby and wonders is it possible to love two people. The doctor shrugs his shoulders saying her husband is very ill but he just doesn't know the outcome . The story continues with various twists and turns but the husband pulls through and is happy that he and his wife are expecting a baby. He says to the old doctor 'Does he realise how precious that is?' The doctor quietly nods and says 'yes '. This got me thinking about love and how at times it seems so hard to love and at other it seems so easy. I suppose that Jesus experienced hardships and dilemmas for much of his ministry and I am always grateful for his example of showing love to those that others scorn. It helps me to stop and think before I act .This Easter Hymn really expresses to me the love of Christ:

My song is love unknown,

My saviour's love to me

Love to the loveless shown

That they might lovely be

O who am I, that for my sake ,

My lord should take frail flesh and die.

11th March 2009

Millie Barker

A Lenten Reflection

Give up complaining—focus on gratitude.

Give up pessimism—become an optimist.

Give up harsh judgments—think kindly thoughts.

Give up worry—trust Divine Providence.

Give up discouragement—be full of hope.

Give up bitterness—turn to forgiveness.

Give up hatred—return good for evil.

Give up negativism—be positive.

Give up anger—be more patient.

Give up pettiness—become mature.

Give up gloom—enjoy the beauty that is all around you.

Give up jealousy—pray for trust.

Give up gossiping—control your tongue.

Give up sin—turn to virtue.

Give up giving up—hang in there!

This poem focuses on what we deem to be one of the most important parts of Lent time, giving something up. In truth, whether we have given up chocolate, cake, silly habits or any of the things mentioned in the poem, giving up something and sticking to it seems to overshadow what we actually get out of Lent. 'To change and to change for the better are two different things.' (German Proverb) Lent offers us the chance to 'change for the better', by helping us to understand the sacrifices and temptations of Christ and maturing us in our Christian lives.

12th March 2009

Brian Morgan

I Hate Lent

Well, I don't actually 'hate' Lent but it is not my most favourite time of the year. Let me explain, what I dislike about Lent is all the 'Thou shalt not ...' and the dreary music in church on Sundays. I know it is supposed to create a difference between the time of lent and the glory of Easter when the music changes into the triumphant music celebrating the risen Lord. You can enjoy your chocolate Easter Egg more on Easter Sunday if you have given up chocolate for the 40 days of Lent. All the same I hate Lent!

I am an Easter person. I enjoy Easter more than Christmas! (How dare Father Christmas say that!) It is so full of the future, All the bulbs are flowering, the blossom is bursting on the trees signalling the fruit that will come in Autumn. The birds making their nests in preparation for their new family this year. The sun is getting warmer and you can feel that the chill wind has lost its bite.

Christmas is all about looking back, back 2,000 years to the birth of a baby, looking back over the past year; not much to look forward to. Easter is about looking forward. Past is the worst of the weather. Longer days, lighter evenings are on their way. We have sun, sea and warm days ahead of us. Give me Easter any day, you can keep Lent.

Keep Lent now there's a thought!

13th March 2009

Doreen

Travelling News

The following has been sent to Fay about our Blog:-

Dear Fay - your Mum introduced Daphne, a friend of mine to St George's Lent blog - Daphne then shared it with me! At our local Methodist Church in Burgh-le-Marsh, Lincolnshire. We have a monthly informal worship - Sunday Night at Eight and I thought it would be good to share some of the Lent thoughts from St George's which we did on Sunday night. It was a real joy to think we were sharing words that mattered to people in another part of the country but with whom we had a connection through your Mum. I also used some of the words at the service I led at Mablethorpe, one of the churches in our Circuit a bit further up the coast, in the morning. Do please thank your friends for their words and thoughts. I have to admit the hymn "My song is love unknown" has been my favourite for many years.

With all good wishes,

Doreen

14th March 2009

Mike Bloss

Lent

I suppose, for Christians, Lent marks a journey both for Our Lord within the wilderness and for us as we endeavour to mirror his period of reflection.

I always agonise over what to give up during this time. Chocolate ? Drink ? Swearing ? - any one of these would represent a huge benefit to my life-style. Usually I fall between all the stalls and end up giving up all and nothing at the same time.

And yet in writing this blog, I have come to realise that perhaps more important is the chance to use this time as a reflective moment in my year. What have I done ? Have I done anything for the love of God or have my deeds all been motivated by self-interest? I think I know the answer which is probably why I find it so hard to meet the gaze of Jesus as he stares at me through closed eyes at the altar rail at St. Georges. Forgive me for i have sinned.

I am reminded of the poem by Robert Frost entitled " The Road Not Taken "

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
and sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
and looked down one as far as I could
to where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
and having perhaps the better claim
because it was grassy and wanted wear;
though as for that, the passing there
had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
in leaves no feet had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I --
I took the one less travelled by,
and that has made all the difference

When I read it I always reflect on wheher I have taken the better choice of road over the last year or could I have taken a more loving one.

At least Lent gives me the chance to confront my faults and work towards changing for the good, along with many other Christians.

Comments: *I empathise; The Road Not Taken is one to ponder on for sure. Tanya White 17th March 2009*

15th March 2009

Susan Wheeler

Meditations

Rising in the Morning

When you rise in the morning,
what fills your head?
Are you thinking of
food and drink,
the pleasures ahead?
Are you planning
the work you must do,
the labour ahead?
Are you fearful of
snares and dangers,
the evils ahead?
Are you hopeful of
all you'll achieve,
the successes ahead?
Let all those worldly thoughts
swirl in your mind;
Then let them flush away,
like dirt in a river.
Empty your head;
Let your brain be at peace.
Quietly, calmly, serenely
Offer the day to God.

FRIENDS OF SADNESS

When I am happy,
I have many friends.
I am witty in conversation,
making people laugh.
I sing sweet ballads,
making people cry.
So they are glad
of my company.
When I am sad,
I have few friends.
I become dull of mind,
with nothing to say.
I become dull of heart,
with no will to sing.
So people shun my company.
The friends of sadness
are true friends.

LYING DOWN WITH GOD

I lie down with God;
May he lie down with me.
I sleep with God;
May he be present in my dreams.
I trust in God;
May he protect me from all danger.
I rise up with God;
May God rise up with me.
I walk with God;
May he always be at my side.
I rely on God;
May he strengthen me in my labour.
I eat with God;
May God be in my bread.
I drink with God;
May God be in my wine.
I live with God;
May God live within me.

These prayers and meditations come from "Celtic Praise" a book of Celtic devotions which I have left lying on the bookshelf for a few years. However, they very much reflect my style of worship – meditative rather than academic debate or inside-out knowledge of the bible. When I first read 'Friends of Sadness' I remembered the time I was taken seriously ill two years ago. My true friends helped me through that difficult time and I give thanks for them; in particular the precious friend who reassured me the first evening I came out of hospital. Pray for people who have no true friends.

Comments: *Susan has done us a great favour for St Patrick's Day in reminding us of Celtic spirituality. We tend to think of Christian tradition as being divided between Rome and the rest, or perhaps Orthodoxy, Rome and the rest. But the oldest British tradition, and one that we have rediscovered in recent years and that has enriched the worldwide Church, is the Celtic tradition. My Scottish and Irish ancestors knew their Bibles and prayed about the basic day to day things of a very simple life lived close to the world of nature. If Lent is about getting back to basics, Celtic prayers, or our own Celtic prayers, are a good way of tuning in to the relationships, the activities, the things that make up our daily lives and opportunities for worship and service - from getting up, through washing and dressing, to the daily meals the daily chores, the routine and chance encounters, to the winding down at the end of the day, and the healing sleep. If the English are feeling left out, the English aristocrat and priest George Herbert knew all about the blessings and holiness of the very ordinary -including doing his own housework. Brian McGinnis 17th March 2009*

16th March 2009

Stephen Westray

A Journey in Focus

Our Christian life is a demanding journey of self discovery, spiritual challenge and the pursuit of God's will, with fallow periods and times of growth. Lent is a time when this journey with all its choices, encounters and opportunities comes into focus. A time for reflection on where we are at and the extent to which we have responded to the Lord's invitation to trust in Him and rest in His love. A time to renew our commitment to cast aside our human frailties, insecurities and fears which so often drive our thoughts, words and actions and turn again to Christ. It is through sacrifice during Lent that our resolve is strengthened and our determination renewed.

I am reminded of an extract from the devotional 'I am With You', words received in prayer-times by Father John Woolley, which continues to inspire and encourage me.

"At times of uncertainty, look to Me for that awareness of whether your immediate influence is to be upon events or whether your part is to watch them unfold!

The presence of fear will so often guide you, and you must act contrary to fear. Do not let worldly considerations affect your direction. When the way ahead is not clear I will be leading you if there is absolute abandonment.

Wait on Me about each specific choice. When I show you a clear path, and, around it, the unclouded sense of My love, you must be decisive. I will not permit consequences which I cannot use; do not listen to evil and fear the consequences of actions after waiting upon Me. Even the 'doubtful' consequences will hasten My plans for you. The results of seeking My will are always good results in the long term, even if immediate consequences make you doubt!

17th March 2009

Margaret Ziolek

Shaved

I want to see the chairs that Christ carved
And sit on a stool that he shaped
When sawing and sharpening slain cedars of Lebanon
Or bending olive trees into tables
Did he imagine the coming
Brutal bite of beam
Upon His back
The ragged pole to which He would be pinned
Glued tight against that wooden woe
Malleted in place?
He then slid off
And cut down Satan's stake
And as for me,
Terrified at all my tawdry piety
The Holy Carpenter
Now planes down my imperfections
With chipped and spliced fingers,
He bleaches the blemish of my grey grain
And chisels out
The sour knots that
Protrude and poison...
This pure and practised craftsman.
Stewart Henderson
Extract from Liturgy of Life, Donald Hilton

Comments: *That is so well expressed I can totally relate to it. Tanya White 17th March 2009*

19th March 2009

Sophie Clayton

Less is More

I have to say that I disagree with what Brian said about hating lent. I can sort of understand that giving something up can be a drag and the time could be seen as dreary due to the lack of flowers in church etc. However, I have to say that I like lent, I find its a time to reflect and connect with God without such distractions. Ok so it can get a bit depressing with no flowers and sombre hymns. However, I believe that we truly need to experience such dreariness in order to appreciate the contrast - the glory and power of God's love and the ultimate sacrifice, which after all is what Easter is all about isn't it? Jesus dying so that we might be saved.

Take as an example Carol's wonderful silent services. The sheer power of silence is so much greater than that which could be achieved through a thousand words. As we experience an ordinary service, the fact that there are no words to listen to, nothing to sort of latch on to and which we can sometimes become lost in, enables us to reflect, talk to God and listen to exactly what he has to say to us. So I think lent is not only a very valuable time, but also it is very beautiful because the lack of decorations and things we personally enjoy enables us to think about what truly matters - our relationship with God. So I like lent and I have to say that I take the view - less is more.

Comments: *Brilliant! Brian McGinnis 20th March 2009*

20th March 2009

Matthew Bloss

Lent For Me

Lent for me is a time for prayer. I pray more in Lent because somehow I feel closer to God during this time. It moves me to think that God gave his only son , Jesus ,whose death on the cross enables us to start again. To be forgiven for what we have done wrong. I pray more in Lent also because it is the lead up to Easter, which I feel is the most important festival in the Christian faith.

In the words of a lent hymn by James Montgomery,

Lord, teach us how to pray aright,

With rev'rence and fear;

though fallen sinners in thy sight,

We may, we must, draw near.

21st March 2009

Tanya White

My Lenten Inspiration.

The Lent journey for me reinforces above all else that it is important to submit to God's will at all times. Even if I wish fervently that something will come true or more importantly that something I really don't want to happen, am sorrowful about and wish fervently could be averted, does happen, I know that I must accept and submit to God's will willingly and happily. The Lord's Prayer is still the most fulfilling prayer for me as it covers everything that is deep in my heart and reinforces again that I will submit to God's will whatever that may be. This to me is one of the most important lessons of Lent as even Jesus at the threshold of his most awful ordeal, wishing that it could be otherwise, submitted to God's will in a truly self-giving, courageous (because it does take courage -and faith- to submit to God's will in all instances) and in an inspiringly magnificent way. The suffering of Christ in submitting to God's will has always helped me. Christ's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane is palpable to any reader: the vicarious anguish is very painful. Whenever I indulge in self-pity I am humbled when I think of Christ's suffering and submission to God's will and his total acceptance of it. I offer you all therefore the following passages and hope it offers succour as it has done me on many occasions in my life. The message to me is that even though we might find it hard we must keep persevering, even accepting the fact that sometimes our spirit may be willing but our flesh is weak. Jesus never gave up on us or his ordeal – he just kept praying for God's will to be done and the strength to go through with it. I hope you will be inspired that prayer and perseverance is the way not to succumb to weakness and to be fully able to accept God's will however awful that may appear at the outset of any ordeal we may face in life.

Matthew 26:36-46 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 42 He went away a second time and prayed, **"My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."** 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. 45 Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!

Luke 22:39-46 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 **"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."** 43 **An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.** 45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 "Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Mark 14:32-42 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 **"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,"** he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." 35 **Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."**

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." 39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. 41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"



22nd March 2009

Peter Wheeler

Is Lent Nothing?

Lent. Well, Lent is a time for giving something up, but for me it's hard to give something up. I've always said I'll give something up for Lent, but it's never happened, so what's the point in Lent?

For me the point in Lent is thinking about what Jesus Christ went through in the 40 days and 40 nights, with nothing, except water, nothing which we enjoy. Lent is thinking about how much effort Jesus went through. Without anything, with no-one to talk to but his thoughts, so if he could do it, why can't we do it?

As you all know today is Mother's Day, which is always on the fourth Sunday of Lent. Lent fits into Mother's Day because it is a time of giving up our needs and giving those needs to our mothers, a time of giving our love to our mothers and helping them by making their day a special day.

Peter Wheeler

23rd March 2009

Gareth Morgan

United we stand, divided we fall.

We hear a lot in the news (and sometimes in the pews!) indicating a 'church in crisis'. Apparently we can't agree on the status of homosexuals, women bishops, the use of contraception, access to the Eucharist, the list never seems to end!

What we don't hear about, and is often overlooked, is the unity that all Christians share. Whatever denomination we belong to, we belong to Christ; we believe in love, peace, forgiveness, compassion and a God whose grace knows no bounds. This is what counts, these values are not only the heart of Christianity but are also in the process of being written on our own hearts.

I dream of the day when the unity we share with one another is foremost, when we look past our differences and see Christ in one another.

I hope you do too!

24th March 2009

Elaine Cooke

In Christ Alone

This is one of my favourite modern Hymns.

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost it's grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
'Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

"In Christ Alone"

Words and Music by Keith Getty & Stuart Townend

25th March 2009

Peta Ebdon

A Special Hymn

This hymn was very special to my mother and very special to me.

**When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.**

**See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

Written by Isaac Watts and published in *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1707.

Charles Wesley reportedly said he would give up all his other hymns to have written this one.

26th March 2009

Emma Westray

Grace and Hope

Sometimes we all have bad times and we all shout and call each other names but these words can help us to control our selves. These words are Grace and Hope. Hope can help us to believe in ourselves and to think good things. Grace could help us be kind and to share and just as Jesus said if your enemy tells you to carry their bag for one mile, carry it for two.

Emma Westray Age 8



Comments: *That's truly lovely and uplifting. Tanya White*

27th March 2009

Anne-Louise Clayton

Samuel Palmer's Coming from Evening Church

The heaven-reflecting, usual moon
Scarred by thin branches, flows between
The simple sky, its light half gone
The evening hills of risen green.
Safely below the mountain crest
A little clench of sheep holds fast.
The lean spire hovers like a mast
Over its hulk of leaves and moss
And those who, locked within a dream
Make between church and cot their way
Beside the secret-springing stream
That turns towards an unknown sea;
And there is neither night nor day,
Sorrow nor pain eternally.

CHARLES CAUSLEY

Comments: *I love the heady mix of nature, worship and the ups and downs of life. Causley recognises that not only can you have all three in close proximity, you need all three. The Creator God is the Temple God and the Saviour God; and we are created beings, made for worship, and carrying our crosses towards the Easter glory. Brian McGinnis*

29th March 2009

Gill Thomas

Christ on the Cross

Christ on the cross,
not crushed by death,
but broken by his love too deep for knowing.

Christ on the cross,
not crushed by death,
but living on in love too deep for crushing.

Christ on the cross
not slain for sin,
but broken by his love too great for giving.

Christ on the cross,
not crushed by death,
but living on in love too great for slaying.

Christ on the cross,
not killed by man,
but broken by his love too strong for holding.

Christ on the cross,
not crushed by death,
but living on in love too strong for killing.

Poem by Clare Richards. Taken from a guide to the Holy Land by Hubert Richards where some went on a Pilgrimage in 1992.

30th March 2009

Tony Aufenast

I believe

I believe because I was changed when I accepted a closer relationship with God.

I believe because I see God at work in my life which is not just coincidence.

I believe the Bible is the work of God.

I believe Jesus is the Son of God and that I can know the Father by knowing the Son.

I don't believe that I or the Earth is an accident.

I believe that Science has its part and that faith has its role and they are both complimentary to seeing the meaning of life.

I believe that I should work with the Earth and not abuse it.

I believe that we all do things wrong and can only do right by following Jesus.

I believe that we need to accept the challenge to be Christ like.

What do you believe this Lent?

31st March 2009

Andy Bloss

Lent

I haven't really given any thought towards Lent until writing this blog. Probably the main reason for this lack of attention is living the University life where other things just seem to get in the way. I was talking to a mate of mine in a familiar student haunting ground (begins with p and ends with b), we were discussing the whole University situation. My friend chose not to go to University and he was asking me what I thought about Uni life. Obviously the usual lines get thrown up, such as the four hours a week lectures, or the long mornings in bed, the beach trips etc, but then I took a more serious tone. I told him that Uni is like living in a lovely bubble. You are free to do what you want. You are secluded from the stresses of the real world and you are in a comfort zone.

What have these student ramblings got to do with Lent then? It is far too easy to live the good life, take what is good from the world, hold it tight, and then wrap yourself in cotton wool. It is a lovely feeling, but are we really satisfied? Hilary was speaking today of how easy it is to want to lessen the burden of the cross. How easy it is just to put the difficult things to one side, kick them away into a dark corner and forget about them. When Jesus went on his journey through the desert he could have easily succumbed to quick fixes and simple pleasures. When Jesus was praying in Gethsemane he could have cut his losses and ran for the hills. Instead he faced up to what he had to do, but more importantly he trusted in God. In 21st century life, it is so so easy to get tangled up in the materialistic world. If I'm in a tough situation I'll type it into Google and see what comes up. It's hard to step over that comfort zone, pop that bubble which is so snug to live in. As was mentioned in today's sermon, the cross is hard and awkward to carry. To trust in God is difficult. However when you get past that initial difficult phase, the hurdles of life start to become much easier to jump over.

Andy Bloss 🙏😊

1st April 2009

David Clayton

Lent, What is it?

Lent is a four letter word, the dictionary defines it thus - The time from Ash Wednesday to Easter observed as a time of fasting in commemoration of Christ's fast in the wilderness (Matthew iv2). The time that Christ spent the wilderness fasting occurred quite early on in Matthew's account and is not at all connected in time to the events of Easter. I assume Lent is where it is in the calendar because historically this time of the year food was scarce and so it made sense for the early church to make this a time of fasting followed by the good time of Easter and so for us the two are connected.

Personally I do not fast or indeed give up anything for Lent, however I do tend to reflect on things at this time. For me my wonderings are mostly concerned with the way we as humans have damaged the world we live in and the people we live with. Daily we hear of the warnings of scientists about global warming, the melting of the ice shelves at the poles, disappearing habitats and animal species, growing human population, wars and financial chaos and the inability of politicians to do much about these things. All very depressing stuff, however there is the hope of Easter to come, the resurrection of Jesus and the victory of Jesus over death this is what it is all about. It is not like the idea of death as portrayed in the ancient Egyptian Song of the Harper -

*No one comes back from that place,
To tell us how they live,
To tell us what they need,
To quieten our hearts until we go there*

But rather it is as John Donne wrote in his poem Death be not proud

*Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not soe,
For, those, whom thou think'st, thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.*

-

*One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.*

3rd April 2009

Ron Parsons

Born Anew

An extract I have found which, I feel, along with the support I have had, from both family and friends, has helped me during the past year,

"Death is a Gateway we all must pass through

To reach that Fair Land where the soul's born anew,

For man's born to die and his sojourn on earth

Is a short span of years beginning with birth...." (Helen Steiner Rice)

4th April 2009

Mike Bloss

Still Travelling!

Well here we are still travelling on our Lentern road. And just as Jesus was tempted I suppose so are we all. In one (more reflective) moment, I began wondering what God was like- if his son was in his image.

At this point I made a connection with a poem I knew from school days. It's by R S Thomas the Welsh minister and fervent Welsh nationalist.

Pisces

Who said to the trout,
You shall die on Good Friday
To be food for a man
And his pretty lady ?

It was I, said God,
Who formed the roses
In the delicate flesh
And the tooth that bruises.

What I like about it, is the fact that whilst we may question everything, it affirms that there is a God whose divinity is all encompassing.
May you continue your journey in faith, safe in the knowledge that God has plans for us !

5th April 2009

Penny Bloss

Feeling Connected ☺

Feelings connected to this period of Lent are sometimes made more meaningful to me through the medium of music and some of the lyrics that we sing or listen to others sing. The following Graham Kendrick hymns seem to express what is in my thoughts and in my heart. I hope they will give all who read this blog both commitment to follow our Lord through Holy week and the hope and joy of Easter to come.

Extract from from The Servant King

There in the garden of tears
my heavy load he chose to bear
his heart with sorrow was torn.
'Yet not my will but yours,'he said.
Come see his hand and his feet
the scars that speak of sacrifice ,
hands that flung stars into space ,
to cruel nails surrendered.

Amazing Love

my Lord,what love is this,
That pays so dearly,
that I, the guilty one,
may go free!
Amazing love ,O what scrfice,
the son of God,giv'n for me.
My debt he pays,and my death he dies,
That I might live,
that I might live.
And so they watched him die,
despised,rejected;
But O,the blood he shed
flowed for me!
And now this love of Christ
shall flow like rivers;
come ,wash your guilt away,
live again!

6th April 2009

Ed Barker

Lenten Thoughts

A time to reflect
On our lives
A time to deflect
Attention from mundane things
A time to repent
For all our misdeeds
A time to make peace
With our misguided friends
A time to abstain
From food and wine
A time to pray
For those in pain
A time to thank God
For all that we have
A time to pledge ourselves
To doing good whenever we can.

By: Edward Barker

To me lent means a time to sacrifice some to sacrifice some form of pleasure, such as chocolate, television, etc. We sacrifice to prove ourselves and to keep faithful in the eyes of God.

We practice lent to follow Jesus and his forty days in the desert. It is also a time when we should reflect on our lives and be thankful that we have so much whilst many others have so little.

7th April 2009

Ray Wheeler

The Dream of the Rood

I was recently introduced to a piece of Old English poetry dating from the 8th century entitled *The Dream of the Rood*. The poem describes the crucifixion and resurrection from the viewpoint of the Cross. The name 'Rood' is the old name for Cross and many churches have rood screens dividing nave from chancel on which stands a large crucifix.

The Dream of the Rood is divided into three parts. The first section is the Dreamer's reaction to his vision of the Cross in which he sees the Cross raised up, covered with gold and jewels but yet notices a stain of blood on its side. In the second part the Rood begins to speak and recalls being cut down in the forest, taken by its enemies to support criminals, then details its emotions as it realises it is to be the cross on which Jesus Christ will be crucified. The Rood and Christ become one – pierced with nails, mocked and tortured, and finally killed and buried. The Cross is resurrected, like Christ, and adorned with gold and silver. Finally, the Cross announces that because of its suffering and obedience, it will be honoured above all trees and commands the Dreamer to tell others what he has seen and heard. The Dreamer's hope of a heavenly home is renewed and he vows to seek again the glorious Rood.

Here is an excerpt of the translation from Old English in which the Rood describes Christ's crucifixion and death on Good Friday:

*Then best wood spoke these words:
"It was long since--I yet remember it--
that I was hewn at holt's end,
moved from my stem. Strong fiends seized me there,
worked me for spectacle; cursèd ones lifted me .
On shoulders men bore me there, then fixed me on hill;
fiends enough fastened me. Then saw I mankind's Lord
come with great courage when he would mount on me.
Then dared I not against the Lord's word
bend or break, when I saw earth's
fields shake.....
.....I shook when that Man clasped me. I dared, still, not bow to earth,
fall to earth's fields, but had to stand fast.
Rood was I reared. I lifted a mighty King,
Lord of the heavens, dared not to bend.*

*With dark nails they drove me through: on me those sores are seen,
open malice-wounds. I dared not scathe anyone.
They mocked us both, we two together . All wet with blood I was,
poured out from that Man's side, after ghost he gave up.
Much have I born on that hill
of fierce fate. I saw the God of hosts
harshly stretched out. Darknesses had
wound round with clouds the corpse of the Wielder,
bright radiance; a shadow went forth,
dark under heaven. All creation wept,
King's fall lamented. Christ was on rood.*

Translation copyright © 1982, Jonathan A. Glenn
For the full text please see

http://historymedren.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=historymedren&cdn=education&tm=73&qps=44_784_1020_521&f=00&su=p897.4.336.ip_&tt=11&bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//faculty.uca.edu/%7Ejona/texts/rood.htm

8th April 2009

Fay Westray

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

I love this time of year, when Spring is in the air and blossom and buds are on the trees. The sky can be blue and clear and everything just seems more hopeful...

When I sometimes walk to work, and look at the trees and bushes, I have the chance to really notice the beauty and the infinite variety of colours, species, structures and forms of the natural environment... God's creation.

When I huddle up with my son or daughter and read a book about whales and dolphins or a book about the Earth and its geography, I cannot help but wonder at its form, the order, the organisation and again the infinite variety and beauty... God's creation.

When I look the natural world, I can see only a reflection and a song of God's kingdom and economy. In all created things, the seed of new life is held within, in all created things the potential for infinite procreation is inherent; every branch, can become two, every twig can become numerous... every creature can reproduce.... God's creation.

How can they laugh and mock at those who believe in a creator God? I have no trouble in believing that animals and plants have changed over the years... but I also believe in a hand that creates, sculpts, prunes and develops, with love, care, direction and purpose.

How can it be logical, scientific and rational that order spontaneously evolves from chaos? It never does in any visible, observed phenomenon. How can the survival of the fittest result in an infinite variety of species and not the survival of the few? How can any creature spontaneously and consistently continue to evolve and transform over millions of years, perfectly adapt to a totally new and hostile environment and yet not wipe itself out in the process... and what of the beauty of that creature that thrills our soul and can take our breathe away?

And what of us... mankind? Beings with a mind, body, spirit... full of emotions, fears, joys, love, hate, talents, consciousness. Beings which thirst for an idol to fill our soul? Is it really so sensible, so logical that we developed spontaneously, without a blueprint to the complex being that we are today?

The bible tells us that God made us in his image, and we as humanity display infinite variety in our faces, our personalities, our talents. We are at our most fulfilled and satisfied when we create, when we love, when we relate. When we work with God and for his kingdom, our efforts have the seeds of procreation within them. When a work is truly blessed and directed by God, it branches, effortlessly out into a myriad of directions, yet holds its core, its form, its organisation, its order.

Jesus, God in human form, came to show us, to give voice to, what we were created to be. Jesus calls us to be like him because it sets us free to enjoy our perfect purpose, to live in union with our Creator and with each other. We all fall short and have our moments when we separate ourselves from God, but God imparts the greatest gift, the gift of grace, which forgives us, redeems and amazingly embraces us and loves us the moment we turn in his direction. This is the 'good news' we as the 'body of Christ' are called to share. God loves us, he craves our recognition, our love, and our passion but in his grace, he leaves the decision with us to make. While 'we dare to consider his offer', he never stops calling us, wooing us or loving us. **Amazing Grace!**



9th April 2009

Oliver Clayton

Towards Easter

I have chosen to post the poem Easter Hymn XVI by A E Housman. His list of things to do at Easter, in the second stanza, is particularly relevant I feel. Moving from the joyful and triumphant imagery of the new day to the bloody sky of the retreating day, this gives the poem a rather melancholic air. The poem provokes us (well me at least) to remember that Easter is not just about bunny rabbits and chocolate.

How clear, how lovely bright,
How beautiful to sight
Those beams of morning play;
How heaven laughs out with glee
Where, like a bird set free,
Up from the eastern sea
Soars the delightful day.

To-day I shall be strong,
No more shall yield to wrong,
Shall squander life no more;
Days lost, I know not how,
I shall retrieve them now;
Now I shall keep the vow
I never kept before.

Ensanguining the skies
How heavily it dies
Into the west away;
Past touch and sight and sound
Not further to be found,
How hopeless under ground
Falls the remorseful day.

10th April 2009

Hilary Eve

Good Friday

The gentle prayers, meditations and drawings of an Anglican priest Graham Jeffery have long been a source of reflection and inspiration for me.

This is about today, from his 'Thank You for coming – Gospel Reflections':

In conclusion,

I have only this to add, something I've been trying to say

for thirty-three years,

for thirty-three million years.

But only now,

in these three awkward hours,

do I seem to find the opportunity

of summing it all up.

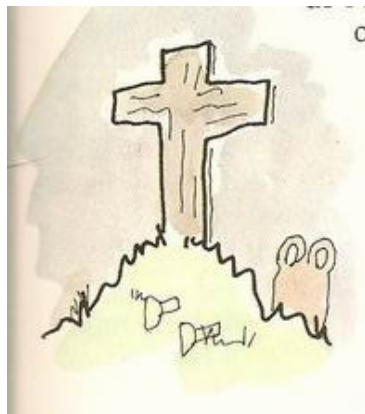
In one word,

in one life,

in one death,

son, daughter,

I love you.



11th April 2009

Matthew Westray

Easter Eggs

"Christ emerged from his tomb almost 2,000 years ago. From the first days Christians have expressed their joy in Christ's new life by every type of symbol or ritual. They took to the ancient and natural symbol of the egg, by adding their own new and supernatural meaning.

So Christians "baptized" the egg as a symbol of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. Christians saw the egg's shell as a symbol of the protective darkness of the life-giving tomb; a hatching chick represented the risen Christ emerging from the tomb on Easter morning. The egg's shape, with neither beginning nor end, was a symbol of eternity. It clearly is also the "womb" of the tomb, where the Crucified was given new life.

So, new life emerges from an egg — Christ emerges alive from the tomb, formerly just a place of death. Life begets a new generation of life coming out of an egg. Christ generates new life for all creation...putting death to death!

The best egg is an empty egg... hatched out... purpose fulfilled...a new life begun. The best tomb is an empty tomb. *The Lord whom you seek is no longer here, for He is risen just as He said!* said the angel."

Extract from an article by Archdiocese of Milwaukee Catholic Cemeteries

And for the young.... The Easter Egg is just fun!!!!

The Big Hunt

Put them in a box or in your smelly socks

Hide them in a drawer or in your teddy's paw

Put them a hole or in the North Pole

Put them in a tree ...

Then take them home for tea!

Matthew Westray Age 7



12th April 2009

Rev David Frost

The Voice

I missed the repeat of the BBC's programme about the last week in the life of Jesus of Nazareth in Holy Week although I did manage to see the last 30 minutes of the last episode.

I found myself outside the empty tomb with Mary Magdalene. The two disciples, John and Peter had already been and gone. What they made of it at the time is left to the viewer's imagination. Mary is distraught. Thinking that the body of Jesus had been stolen, she is beside herself with remorse and anger. Then the Voice speaks. As she turns around to see who it is addressing her, her eyes begin to open in utter astonishment and total surprise.

The next time you see her she is confronting a group of disillusioned and sceptical men. 'What was he like,' they ask? 'Well, he was the same and yet he was different,' she replies. Mary is about to be dismissed as a hallucinating and grieving woman when the Voice speaks. The eyes of the men begin to open in utter astonishment and total bewilderment. One disciple believes it's a trick of the light so the Voice speaks again. His scepticism is shattered and his faith is restored.

The two men on the road to Emmaus find themselves discussing the events of the first Easter when a stranger joins them. He is asked to stay the night because it is getting late. The stranger sits at the table, takes bread, breaks it and gives it to them. He then takes a cup and offers it to them. It is so familiar. The Voice has spoken again. The eyes of the two men are also opened.

Peter is sitting in the market place with the Voice. They are having an open discussion. The Voice tells Peter that he has to leave. The Voice gets up and walks completely unnoticed through the market place and disappears in the crowd.

Easter is like that. The Voice still speaks and eyes are continually being opened.

Close your mind to the possibilities of the first Easter and the Voice will pass you by unrecognised. The Christian Church gives a name to this Voice because it is one that is still speaking today. On Easter Sunday the Church will celebrate the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. And the Voice will continue to speak and those who listen will find a love and a meaning to life itself in this rather self-centred and materialistic world.

I would like to leave you with something that was given to me by a young member of my congregation. It simply says:

Easter is coming

A day of happiness

So get ready

The Lord has died

Easter has come

Remember Jesus the Lord.

Jesus Christ is risen. The Voice still speaks!

I wish you all a very happy and blessed Easter.