

Dear friends,

Holy Week, the climax of the Christian year which reflects the final week of Jesus' life is always introduced by Palm Sunday. The editorial notes in most Bibles refer to it as the "Triumphal entry" but I'm not sure that is how Jesus would have understood it. It sets up the week that is the climax of the final battle between the kingdoms of this world (represented by Rome) and the values of the kingdom of God (represented by Jesus). Our liturgical representation of the week follows what happened by holding the Maundy Thursday Eucharist and the framing of the time Jesus spent on the cross with the "cross of Christ" at 12 Noon at St. Michael's Otterton and the Good Friday reflections service at St. Peter's at 3pm, where the kingdoms of this world thought they had scored a great victory and leading up to the highlight of the Christian year with our celebration of Easter on Sunday.

## Holy Week

**Palm Sunday** introduces Holy Week and then on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we have the service of compline at 7pm in the Lady Chapel at St. Peter's. This is a short and simple service of night prayer.

**Note:** On Wednesday this is followed by the last in our Lent course which is on contemplation so can just continue in the Lady chapel after a short gap to let others leave if they want to.

**Maundy Thursday** at **7pm**. Eucharist and stripping of the altars at St. Peter's

**Good Friday** at **12 Noon** – "The cross of Christ" at St. Michael's Otterton – a traditional service with choir, hymns and readings.

At **3pm** at St. Peter's. Our annual service of Good Friday reflections.

**Easter Sunday** at 6.30 there is a sunrise service on the beach and then services at the normal times in each of our churches.

## Sunday 9 April – Easter Sunday

I will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively, Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at the 8am service at St. Peter's, canon Mike Williams will then preside at the 10am service and the 6pm Choral evensong at St. Peter's.

**Acts 10: 34-43.** This speech by Peter to the house of Cornelius is a perfect and compact summation of the main points of the Christian story that an outsider needs to hear. The whole drama of Good Friday is reduced to one line “they put him to death by hanging him on a tree”. When telling the Christian story it is always difficult to know where to begin, where to finish, what to include and what to leave out. Deciding these things changes with every person and every situation and we can only pray that when we are in that position ourselves that the Holy Spirit gives us the words to say.

**Colossians 3: 1-4.** “Your life is hidden with Christ in God”. With these words Paul describes the effect of the resurrection on the lives of those who believe. Christ is in all and through all and in the power of the resurrection one recognises that our egocentric lives are actually at one with God, that our true selves and Christ meet in us, so our egos melt away and are “hidden” in Christ. Paul in other places talks of being “in Christ” which amounts to the same thing.

**John 20: 1-18.** The story of Mary Magdalene and her encounter with the risen Lord in the garden is a beautiful and simple tale told exquisitely. There are many aspects one could concentrate on but the thing that hits me more than anything is that while Mary doesn't recognise Jesus straight away it is when she hears her name on the lips of Jesus that the scales fall from her eyes. This accentuates the deeply personal nature of the Christian faith which has two poles that must be kept in balance – the personal and the universal. Our Lord is both Jesus the man and also the universal Christ.

## Thought for the Day

The universal and the personal come together in Jesus the Christ. Jesus of Nazareth is a human being who lives, works, loves, suffers and dies a very human existence. But He is also the universal Christ, the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, through whom God created the universe and through whom God revealed his salvific will for all creation. These two things, man and God, personal and universal, united in Jesus the Christ form the

extraordinary claims that Christians make about the content of our faith. We are apt to either forget or underplay just how big a claim we are making and can become complacent and dismissive of people who can't or won't make that leap of faith. We say that Jesus Christ reveals the truth about life, the way to live ones life and indeed is life itself ("I am the way, the truth and the life"). It could become depressing when we consider how weak the Christian witness has become in the Western world, and one level it is depressing, but turning to the universal nature of Christianity we can only have eternal hope and joy when we consider that God holds all of existence in the palm of his hand, nothing good will ever pass away and in the end all things will be put right and there will be no more death and no more suffering. Yes, there is endless suffering and despair in this world, and this can only be met by eternal love, hope and joy. Jesus the Christ absorbed everything that the world could throw at him and Jesus the Christ has overcome the world.

## **The Prayer for Today** was written by John Stott

**Lord Jesus, risen from the dead and alive for evermore.  
Stand in our midst tonight as in the upper room.  
Show us thy hands and thy side.  
Speak thy peace to our hearts and minds.  
And send us forth into the world as thy witnesses.  
For the glory of thy name.**

Love and peace,  
Martin