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SUNDAY 12th April 2020

Easter Sunday

An Easter message from Fr Colin

Holy Week and Easter in isolation

The strange circumstances in which we find ourselves this year have led me to rethink the journey through Holy Week and Easter Day in a new way, which I hope you might find helpful as we continue to live in isolation from our normal family or social contexts. I am sure that all of us miss not being able to come together as a church family, not least during this week, when we are missing the liturgies and rituals that make up this most special of times in our church year. We might find the restrictions that have been put upon us out of necessity to be painful or challenging, but in my own reflection and prayer during this week I have realised that for me these restrictions have opened up new depths to the story of the first Easter.

I write these words on Maundy Thursday, when we would normally celebrate the institution of the Eucharist by our Lord in a liturgy that also includes the ritual foot washing, recalling the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper in which he shows the disciples that he has come to serve and not be served and that they (and us) are called to do likewise. We then walk with Jesus to the Garden of Repose (representing the Garden of Gethsemane). Jesus will be betrayed and denied, his disciples will flee, and Jesus will be left alone, and in that isolation, we are called to watch and wait with him. *Isolation* is the climax to Maundy Thursday, and it continues into Good Friday and the horror of the cross. The people who greeted Jesus with such joy on Palm Sunday have turned against him, and we are called to face the cross of Christ whilst his disciples have run away. Jesus feels as though he must face his agonising death alone, in isolation. He even screams to God for deserting him: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34). And in that apparent isolation we are called to witness to all that is happening.


And then Easter. We often reflect upon Easter Day as being the triumphant denouement to a tragic week. But Easter Sunday dawns in a world that is not unlike our own this year. There is nothing to celebrate. Jesus had met his end in isolation, even his friends had deserted and left. He had been laid in a stone-cold tomb, shut away from the world outside. When Mary Magdalen walks through the garden to the tomb she does so in isolation, frightened of what might happen next. She finds the tomb empty and weeps because Jesus is not there, and she remains isolated and frightened. And then she encounters the risen Lord and realises that she is not alone at all. She discovers what St Paul so eloquently wrote some years later, and which is a message to each one of us in these challenging times: 'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38-39).

Alleluia, Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

With love and prayers
Fr Colin

Remembering Those Who Need Our Prayers This Week

Shelley Lazlett, Geoff, Anna Chapman, Christopher, Richard Rundle, Martyn Lawlor, Hillary, Madison, Amy, Carmell, Christine, Ray Kent, Sandra Hewett, Spencer, Margaret Cavey, John Haughton, Pete Martin, Anne Brown; Pete; Fr Beau Brandie; Jenny Pilling; Fr Charles

 We Remember Ken Pask who has died recently and Basil Sheffield, James Jones and Douglas Shepherd whose anniversaries fall at this time.

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