

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

Registered Charity no. 234025

Father Peter Cryan

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Newsletter for the week of 31st March 2024

Sunday Readings Cycle B

Weekday Readings Cycle II

Readings for Easter Vigil: Exodus 14:15-15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14; Ezekiel 36:16-28; Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 16:1-7

Easter Day Readings: Acts 10:34,37-43; Psalm 117; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; John 20:1-9

Saturday 30th March 8.00pm EASTER VIGIL MASS

Sunday 31st March 10.30pm EASTER DAY MASS

Monday 1st April

Tuesday 2nd April

Wednesday 3rd April 11.30am Mass of the Easter Octave

Thursday 4th April

Friday 5th April 11.30am Mass of the Easter Octave

Saturday 6th April 10.00am Mass of the Easter Octave

Saturday 6th April 8.00pm 1st Mass of 2nd Sunday of Easter

Sunday 7th April 10.30am Mass of 2nd Sunday of Easter

Readings for 2nd Sunday of Easter Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 117; 1 John 5:1-6; John 20: 19-31

(Readers for Easter Vigil Readings should collect booklets from the sacristy)

EASTER SERVICES

Easter Vigil 30th March 8.00pm: Paschal Fire outside & Candle brought in a darkened church with progressive lighting of congregation's candle; then "Exultet" Hymn sung. 3 O.T readings, one N.T reading & Gospel, Blessing of water with Renewal Baptismal promises. Liturgy of the Eucharist as normal. *Easter Clergy* Collection. Outgoing Collection for the *Holy Places*.

Easter Day 31st March 10.30am: Mass as normal with renewal of Baptismal Promises. *Easter Clergy* Collection. Outgoing Collection for the *Holy Places*



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Last Sunday £233.30

NEW SETS of ENVELOPES READY

Sets of Envelopes to start next Sunday 7th April are ready for collection. Some extra sets are available for you if you would like to take one. Using envelopes for your offering doesn't commit you to giving any set amount or committing yourself to a *Gift Aid tax* boost. It's a simply a valuable reminder to give regularly and support your church and week by week by even a small amount you can make :” *Offering to God and to work of his Church.*

HOLY PLACES COLLECTION

More than ever this year with the destruction in Gaza & the West Bank we should try to give generous support for the *Holy Places*. It's not just to keep the fabric of the *Holy Land* shrines maintained but also to keep the Church Communities alive during this catastrophe of suffering and to survive in the land where our Lord himself walked.

SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be sought on Good Friday 11.00 to 1.00pm & after 3.00pm Solemn Liturgy. On Holy Saturday **no** celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is permitted.

CRAFT CLUB

Wed 17th April 12.15-2.30pm is the next meeting, then fortnightly during school term time.

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital let Fr. Peter know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

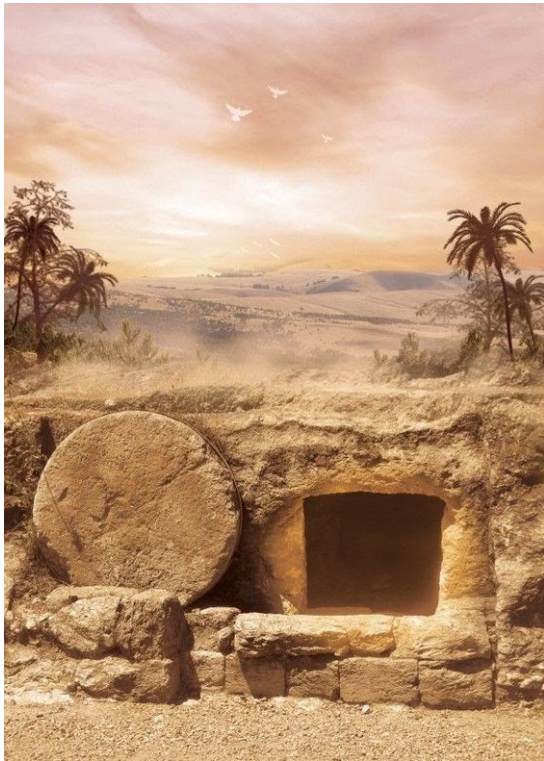
DIARY of EVENTS

-Sun 31st March start of B.S.T- clocks forward 1hr

-Mon 8th April Christ the King & All Hallows reopen

-Sun 28th April Appeal for *Network for a Better World*.

A Happy & Joyful Easter



The Disturbing Fact of the Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the be-all and end-all of the Christian faith. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, all bishops, priests and Christian ministers should go home and get honest jobs, and all the Christian faithful should leave their churches immediately. As Paul himself put it: "*If Jesus is not raised from the dead, our preaching is in vain and we are the most pitiable of men.*"

It's no good, of course, trying to explain the resurrection away or rationalize it as a myth, a symbol or an inner subjective experience. None of that does justice to the novelty and sheer strangeness of the Biblical message. It comes down finally to this: if Jesus was not raised from death, Christianity is a fraud and a joke; if he did rise from death, then Christianity is the fullness of God's revelation, and Jesus must be the absolute centre of our lives. There is no third option.

I want to explore, very briefly, a handful of lessons that follow from the disquieting fact of the Resurrection. First, this world is not it. What I mean is that this world is not all that there is. We live our lives with the reasonable assumption that the natural world as we've come to know it through the sciences and discern it through common sense is the final framework of our lives and activities. Everything (quite literally, everything) takes place within the theatre of our ordinary experience. And one of the most powerful and frightening features of the common-sense world is death. Every living thing dies and stays dead. Indeed, everything in the universe,

scientists tell us, comes into being and then fades away permanently.

But what if this is not in fact the case? What if the laws of nature are not as ironclad as we thought? What if death and dissolution did not have the final say? What if, through God's power and according to his providence, a "new heavens and a new earth" were being born? The resurrection of Jesus from the dead shows as definitively as possible that God is up to something greater than we had imagined or thought possible. And therefore we don't have to live as though death were our master and as though nihilism were the only coherent point of view. After he had encountered the risen Christ, Paul could even taunt death: "*Where is your sting?*" In light of the resurrection, we can, in fact, begin to see this world as a place of gestation, growth and maturation toward something higher, more permanent, more splendid.

Here's a second lesson derived from the resurrection: the tyrants know their time is up. Remember that the cross was Rome's way of asserting its authority. Roman authorities declared that if you run afoul of our system, we will torture you to death in the most excruciating (*ex cruce*, from the cross) way possible and then we will leave your body to waste away be devoured by the beasts of the field. The threat of violence is how tyrants throughout the centuries have always asserted their authority. Might makes right. The crucified Jesus appeared to anyone who was witnessing the awful events on Calvary to be one more affirmation of this principle: Caesar always wins in the end. But when Jesus was raised from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit, the first Christians knew that Caesar's days were numbered. Jesus had taken the worst that the world could throw at him and he returned, alive and triumphant. They knew that the Lord of the world was no longer Caesar, but rather someone whom Caesar had killed but whom God had raised from death. This is why the risen Christ has been the inspiration for resistance movements up and down the centuries.

In our own time we saw how deftly John Paul II wielded the power of the cross in Communist Poland. Though he had no nuclear weapons or tanks or mighty armies, John Paul had the power of the resurrection, and that proved strong enough to bring down one of the most imposing empires in the history of the world. Once again, the faculty lounge interpretation of resurrection as a subjective event or a mere symbol is exactly what the tyrants of the world want, for it poses no real threat to them.

The third great lesson of the resurrection is that the path of salvation has been opened to everyone. Paul told us that "though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave ... accepting even death, death on a cross." In a word, Jesus went all the way down, journeying into pain, despair, alienation, even god-forsakenness. He went as far as you can go away from the Father. Why? In order to reach all of those who had wandered from God.

Then, in light of the resurrection, the first Christians came to know that, even as we run as fast as we can away from the Father, all the way to god-forsakenness, we are running into the arms of the Son. The opening up of the divine life allows everyone free access to the divine mercy. And this is why the Lord himself could say, "*When the Son of Man is lifted up, he will draw all people to himself,*" and why Paul could assert in 1 Corinthians, "*When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all.*" The resurrection shows that Christ can gather back to the Father everyone whom he has embraced through his suffering love.

So on Easter Sunday, let us not domesticate the still stunning and disturbing message of resurrection. Rather, let us allow it to unnerve us, change us, set us on fire.

THE *Wednesday* WORD



Encountering Christ The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families



Set aside 10-15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute of settling silence.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.

1

Read

The Gospel for Sunday 31st March 2024

THE EMPTY TOMB

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,” she said, “and we don’t know where they have put him.” So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Taken from John 20:1-9 *Easter Sunday, Year B*

2

Reflect

After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

There are several accounts in the various gospels of the discovery of the empty tomb. The slight variations between them show all the marks of oral tradition, for in genuine oral tradition each ‘performance’ is different. Different people tell the story slightly differently, stressing different aspects. This story stresses the proof that the tomb really was empty, for the apostles examine the evidence carefully. Other accounts concentrate less on the evidence and more on the message, that they will meet the Risen Lord in Galilee. It was important to establish that the tomb was empty, to prevent the charge that the meetings with the Risen Christ were simply ghost-appearances. Apart from the proof that this was a real, living and bodily person, these meetings emphasise two factors, the power of the Risen Christ and the commission given to the disciples. The disciples are to go out into the whole world and spread the message, always accompanied and strengthened by Christ himself. In this account Simon Peter is clearly the senior, authority figure, to whom the Beloved Disciple defers. But it is the love of the Beloved Disciple which brings him to faith.

What aspects of the gospel accounts of the resurrection help to strengthen your own faith?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

3

Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, joy, forgiveness, hope or something else.

4

Pray for Families

This Wednesday’s word for our school families is EASTER!

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as:

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of **Sunday 31st March 2024**



1st Reading: Acts 10:34. 37-43

Peter Instructs Cornelius

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: "You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses - we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead - and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name."



Peter was speaking to Cornelius. Cornelius was the Roman centurion who already revered God and had had a vision that he should invite Peter to come and instruct him. Peter shows that Jesus was a real human being. He went about bringing God's peace to everyone he could meet. Nevertheless, he was executed as a criminal. But then he was raised from death to a life that was totally new. This was the fulfilment of all the promises made to Israel, bringing to completion God's plan in creation. Life moved into a new gear. Peter expresses this when he says that God has appointed the Risen Jesus to judge the living and the dead. The Jews expected that at the end of time, at the completion of all things, God would come to set everything to rights, to judge things according to their true worth. Now Peter says that Jesus is the one who will be this judge. Jesus is the Lord who will bring all things to completion and to judgment. By his rising from the dead Jesus has supreme authority over the whole world. Paul put it in this way: he said that Jesus was 'constituted Son of God in power' by the resurrection.

How can we be more effective witnesses to the Risen Lord?



2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

New Life in Christ

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed - and he is your life - you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.



This reading is the visible tip of an iceberg, of which much more lies below the surface! Paul here tells us that all our interest must be in heavenly things, the things of Christ, because we share Christ's life. What is more, that life is no ordinary life. What does all this mean? We share Christ's life because faith in Christ means that we put all our trust and hope in him. We have been baptised into Christ; that is, by baptism we have been dipped into Christ as into a river, and come up soaked with or dripping with Christ. I am growing into Christ; I share in his inheritance, his status as Son of God. The wellspring of my life is no longer the ordinary, natural life which enables me to live, breathe, digest, feel, see, sing and play, love and hate. It is the Spirit of Christ which spurs me to generosity, service, kindness, self-control, peace and openness. This life, says Paul, is still hidden, and will be fully manifested only at the coming of Christ. But if I am to be true to my profession of faith in baptism, the principles on which I operate must be those of this risen life of Christ.

How can we be most true to our profession of faith at baptism?

I am growing into Christ; I share his inheritance.

The Wednesday Word Encountering Christ: Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**