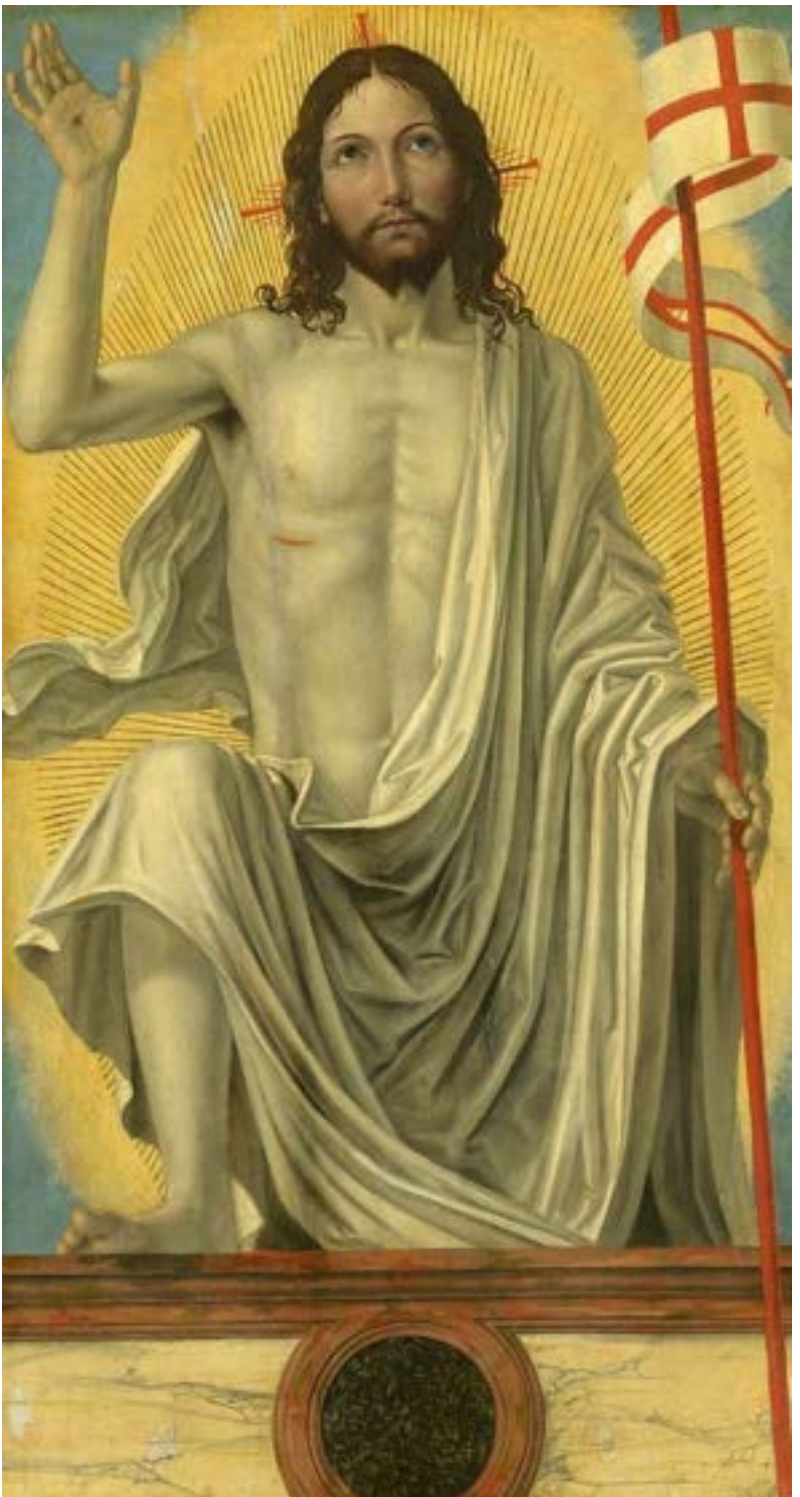


# HIGH TIDE

*Parish  
Magazine*

*Weymouth  
St Paul  
with Fleet*

APR 2024



## INDEX

From the Vicar	3
<i>Josie Hastings MBE</i> : Update on the Kenya project	4
<i>Lesley Cheesman</i> : The Munch Club	10
A simple way to make sure St. Paul's grows...	11
<i>Jeanne James</i> : Eileen Galling BCA	12
<i>Dawn Beutner</i> : The sleeping Saints of Turkey	14
Calendar, Intentions, & Anniversaries	18
Morning & Evening Prayer	20
Orthodox Prayer for Easter	28
From the Book of Common Prayer	29
Saint of the month: St. Catherine of Siena	30
On the Alleluia	33
Chrism Mass in Exeter Cathedral	34
An Egg-cellent history & Eggs to “dye for”: Easter Eggs	36
<i>Dale Ahlquist</i> : The Harrowing of Hell	38
<i>Carl E. Olson</i> : The three “R”s of the Resurrection	40
Psalm 36	42
Contacts	44

*Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Parish Magazine  
and to Liz Evans for the proofreading.*

*The next Magazine will be published on **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April**. Please, send all articles,  
information, news you wish to be publish by Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April.*

Front cover: “Christ risen from the Tomb” (oil on panel)  
by Bergognone (1490); National Gallery of Art, Washington (USA).

## From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

A few days ago I received an email from a business that concluded with the following words: *“Have a lovely Easter Holiday.”* How very sad, I thought, that the greatest, the most astonishing, the most incredible thing that could and did happen to us, human beings, is reduced to a “happy holiday.” Instead of celebrating our restoration to divine life and to eternal happiness, the conquest of satan, and our blessed escape from sin and death, we are happy and content enough with two extra days of holiday...

Anyway, as they were kind and thoughtful enough to share and wish me something they thought was “lovely” and “happy”, I thought it was only kind to do the same... So, I have decided — and I invite you to do the same! — to change the footer of my emails for the duration of Easter-tide and fill it with some of the following quotes for all to read and, hopefully, to ponder:

*“Let no one fear death, for the death of our Saviour has set us free!”* (St. John Chrysostom) *“O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave.”* (St. John Chrusostom) *“For thus the power of death was overcome, and the dominion of corruption, which had gained sway over us was destroyed.”* (St. Cyril of Alexandria) *“I arose, alleluia, and I am still with thee, alleluia.”* (Easter Liturgy) *“Do not be afraid for I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.”* (Revelation 1,18) *“This joyful Eastertide away with sin and sorrow! My Love, the Crucified, has sprung to life this morrow.”* (Easter Hymn) *“Now all things have been filled with light, both heaven and earth.”* (St. John Damascus) *“Christ rises us up from the dead and gives us life. This is the hidden power of our faith.”* (St. Symeon) *“Ever blessing the Lord, we praise his Resurrection. For having endured the Cross for us, he has destroyed death by death.”* (Anonymous, 5<sup>th</sup> cent.)

Now, I know that two extra days of holiday are “cool” but I think the message we, Christians have, is outright amazing, astonishing, mind-blowing, breathtaking, and awesome! And I think it’s high time we start spreading it shamelessly...

This is indeed my Easter wish for you all: may you be filled with the joy of the Risen Lord so much that you cannot contain it anymore and “crack like an easter egg” and start radiating it on all those around you!

Assuring you of my prayers, I am,  
ever yours in Christ,

*Fr. Gregory* 3

## Update on the Kenya project

*Josie Hastings MBE writes:*

As always, a massive thank you to everyone who has supported, input into and shown interest in the work of Dorset Murugi Community Projects. Many people have given time, money or even ideas since the last update and I am pleased to say we are continuing to make a fantastic and growing contribution to the Murugi community. Thank you again for supporting through sponsorship, donations, 200 club, fund raising, selling jewellery/bags, helping with other tasks or simply spreading the word!

We are in the process of setting up a charitable trust, and as such we have decided to slightly change the name.

We are now called **Murugi Community Trust**. This is slightly less of a mouthful, and better describes what we do as the beneficiaries of the projects are in Murugi (not Dorset). We also have people involved and helping from all parts of the country and beyond – not only Dorset. The bank account has been renamed from Kenya 2020 to **Murugi Community Trust** – please make future cheques payable accordingly. The bank sort code/account number remains the same.

In February we took a group of 22 volunteers on a trip to Kenya (everyone paying for their own expenses), and I hope I speak for everyone in saying we had a productive, interesting and most of all an enjoyable time. As always, we were incredibly warmly welcomed by everyone we had contact with and it is clear how much difference the contributions of our supporters make to the lives of the most needy in the area. Unfortunately it is also clear that there is always more to be done so please continue to support and spread the word as much as you are able.

I thought it would be worth sharing a brief summary of the trip, different strands of ongoing activity and key projects since I last shared an update.

1. Sponsorship – the number of children sponsored continues to grow and we now have over 300, who attend 13 different schools. These children are given access to an education as well as school meals so thank you to everyone who supports – you really are making a direct impact on the lives of so many. During the February trip we visited every school (multiple times), meeting most of the sponsored children and their teachers. An item of school clothing was bought for each sponsored child, paid from funds raised. This meant that each child received an item that they were most in need of (usually shoes!) and they were incredibly grateful so thank you for the

support. Unfortunately there are so many poor families and children who need help with ensuring they are able to access an education, and we have come home with an extensive waiting list of additional children who need support, so please spread the word about our sponsorship programme.

2. The group bought and distributed much needed educational books to all of the primary schools, thanks to a very significant grant from Dorchester Casterbridge Rotary club, which was topped up with funds from fund raising. The schools were genuinely thrilled with these donations and it is something we are keen to do more of in future.

3. Washable Sanitary Towel project – led by Julie Fry with the support of Meryl and a number of others during the trip, this project continues to benefit many girls in the area. The group revisited over 25 girls that had been supported in the past, giving them more pads and pants to complement their kit, as well as giving kits and talks to 80 girls who were seen for the first time. This continues to be a hugely beneficial project in maximising the amount of time young girls can attend school. Special thanks to Julie for leading the project and for all of the work in producing huge volumes of kits for distribution.

4. Jikos project – this started in 2018 and is highly successful. Traditionally the school kitchens cook on open fires which is not only costly in terms of firewood, but also ecologically unsound and very bad for the health of those exposed to the smoke. A “jiko” is an enclosed large stainless steel cooking pot that greatly reduces these issues. They are expensive to buy and install but well worth it. Dorchester Casterbridge Rotary have continued to fund the roll out into our partner schools. We visited the previously installed units, but also scoped out and agreed the rollout into three more schools (plus a key addition to a previously installed jiko). Special thanks to Dave Harris and Les Fry who joined the trip from Dorchester Casterbridge Rotary and continue to passionately support this activity. Special thanks also to Kelly Eustace and her son Niall who were on the trip and did a fantastic job of fundraising to install a jiko into Katharaka school. Niall put a lot of effort into raising funds and should be very proud. These have all now been installed since our return and the schools are already seeing the benefit.

5. Distribution of 22 large bag fulls of clothes, laptops and phones brought from the UK – during the trip these were distributed to those most in need. Thank you to everyone who contributed donations.

6. Housing – the group set themselves the task of raising funds in order to build two new small houses for families who were living in very poor housing conditions. We visited the sites of these, and some members of the group helped with the start of construction of one of the houses. One house

is now complete, and the other is well under way. These will greatly improve the quality of life for these young families. We also painted the inside of a house that had been previously constructed, and re-housed a family into rented accommodation which will be paid ongoing from fund raising.

7. Painting classrooms – a number of days were spent by the team painting classrooms in two schools that were in desperate need of a refresh. We spruced up four classrooms plus some incredibly talented members of the volunteer group also painted a fantastic educational mural in a newly built infant classroom. It looked amazing and the school were over the moon!

8. The group visited the homes of a number of the sponsored children. During these visits we met a sponsored girl from Donna Kelly special needs unit, who was infested with “jiggers” in her fingers and toes. These are the larvae of fleas who live in dusty/dirty conditions and lay eggs in human skin. It is incredibly painful and unpleasant and can afflict the poorest in the society due to living conditions. The group decided to utilise donated funds to install concrete flooring in the girls home, to hopefully help to prevent future infestations. A young man was also visited who was raising two sponsored children, who was incredibly poorly nutritioned and hungry. Members of the group purchased food for him, but also chickens and a chicken coop to help feed the family on an ongoing basis. When they were re-visited during the trip it was great to see the food was already having a positive impact on their wellbeing.

9. We ran a “Fun Day” at Mutindwa primary school (a kind of non-traditional sports day!). I think the volunteers had just as much fun as the children! Thank you to Chris Keat for providing prizes – the children loved them. All of them received a prize!

10. Some of the group ran basic computer lessons in a couple of schools that have previously been provided with IT equipment. The children were hugely engaged and our volunteer teachers did a fantastic job (even if some had only limited computer knowledge themselves.....!)

11. Baragu Health Centre runs an HIV support group – providing education, medicine, mentoring and food for those impacted by HIV. The 200 Club (*a note for the readers of the Parish Magazine: this is not the 200 Club we run! - FrG*), which many of you support, directly funds food for this group – good nutrition is essential for the drugs to work most effectively. Our volunteers met the group, discussing how the members of the community impacted by HIV manage their daily lives, better understanding the medical side but also the cultural implications as there can still be significant prejudice in the society. The volunteers contributed additional funds to the “table banking” while on their visit, which will be well utilised by Liz who runs the

group. Thank you to Karen Boyce for continuing to run the 200 Club and everyone who contributes. We also met with the management of the health centre and discussed potential future projects which could be supported. The centre wants to specialise in women's health, and would like to convert an unused ward into an improved maternity unit. We will explore how best to support the health centre going forward as it is a key part of the community that is critically under funded (sound familiar?!)

12. Many volunteers visited Don Kennies, a young disabled and almost blind man who has been supported by the group for many years. We provide a regular food drop. He really appreciated the visits and engaged with the group – demonstrating his extensive knowledge of global football and politics (which he gains from listening to the solar radio provided)

13. Other activities – the volunteers spent a day learning to cook Kenyan food, then prepared a meal and hosted all of the partner schools headteachers and key contacts. This was the first time we have brought all of the school partners together. Some members of the volunteer group went on a day trek on Mount Kenya (spotting zebra and elephants on the way!), had a guided tour of the local co-operative tea factory, and finally spent a fantastic day at Nairobi National Park before returning home. I have included a selection of photos from the trip for your interest. What you can do to help:

- We have a long waiting list of more children who need sponsorship – please spread the word with friends and family;
- If you think you could sell some of our Kenyan jewellery and bags at an event near you, or alternatively hold a coffee morning together with a sale I would be very grateful. I can arrange to send you some stock. We also often need volunteers to setup and staff stalls at a number of events through the year;
- 200 Club membership – please encourage family/ friends to join for £12 per year (there is a monthly draw and half of the donations are given as prizes with the other half going to the HIV group);
- General fund raising – ad hoc contributions/ fund raising activities are always well utilised for food provision, medical needs, housing, jikos, clothes etc etc. Any amounts no matter how small or large are very welcome;

Finally, if you are interested in joining a future trip to Kenya please get in touch (07796 028479; Mrsjosiehastings@gmail.com). We are likely to visit again in February 2025, with the possibility of an additional trip in September/ October this year.

Once again a very big thank you for your support. Together we are making a difference to people less fortunate than ourselves.

Children at Kiriani School



Mural painting



One of the houses to be replaced



Classroom painting



Taking a house down section by section





Foundations for new house



Book presentation to school



Sponsored children with donated clothes



Fun Day



Don Kennies



# The Munch Club

*Lesley Cheesman writes:*

The Munch club began in 2009 and was started at the suggestion of a Weymouth Council employed group who were interested in setting up a lunch club in the Westham area to cater for the over sixties and as we had the facilities we were invited to be a part of this new venture. To set up the club, we were given money to buy equipment and provided with two chefs helping us for the first six months, when we should be self-sufficient, which proved to be. The club would charge members a fee to cover the cost of food which included a main meal, pudding, plus tea or coffee and open every other week.

A raffle was introduced with prizes mainly provided by the generosity of members.

At the start of Covid, which coincided with Roger Moore, our longest serving cook, retiring and Bernie Halama, our then manager, moving home, we had no idea how we were going to re-start, with no money to pay a chef. After much deliberation we came upon the idea of having fish and chips and Daniel's at Charlestown kindly offered their wonderful fish and chips (or giant sausage) at an exceptional rate, which enabled us to also give a peach and ice cream desert without increasing the fee being paid by the members.

The club, renamed 'The Fish and Chip Club' has become a very successful outreach for St. Paul's and over the years many new friendships have formed and with Pam Winspear, as Manager, and a loyal band of helpers we hope to continue and grow.

The main reason for the club to exist is outreach. However, when thanks to the raffle extra funds are raised, that money goes to help our Parish with its bills, daily running costs, and other outreach projects. We are also grateful to Weymouth Council for their recent generous grant.

**Crossword puzzle:** *Congratulations to Jeanne James who correctly solved the crossword puzzle and handed it in first.*



If we want our church and parish to have a future, we must (with God's help!) grow in

PRAYER	KNOWLEDGE	CHARITY	COMMUNION	MISSION
<p><i>"If about me you can do nothing,"</i>  <i>John 15,5</i></p> <p>Does my prayer life go beyond Sunday? There is so more that St. Paul's offers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• daily Mass;</li> <li>• Morning &amp; Evening Prayer (parish magazine);</li> <li>• anointing;</li> <li>• seasonal services;</li> <li>• feast days during the week;</li> <li>• articles on prayer;</li> <li>• Confession;</li> <li>• spiritual direction...</li> </ul>	<p><i>"Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you,"</i>  <i>1 Peter 3,15</i></p> <p>Do I know about my faith? Do I use the occasions St. Paul's offers to grow?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sermons;</li> <li>• the varied articles in the Parish Magazine;</li> <li>• bible group;</li> <li>• Rosary Group;</li> <li>• all the magazines and leaflets available in church for free...</li> </ul>	<p><i>"God is love,"</i>  <i>1 John 4,8</i></p> <p><i>"If I do not have charity, I am nothing,"</i>  <i>1 Corinthians 13,3</i></p> <p>Do I honestly try to forgive and to love? Just as Christ commanded us to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refusing to be part of any gossip;</li> <li>• helping out in the Parish, in SPOT, with Warm Welcome;</li> <li>• rejoicing in and helping others;</li> <li>• not criticising;</li> <li>• admitting when I am wrong...</li> </ul>	<p><i>"They were one [...] And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."</i>  <i>Acts 2,47</i></p> <p>Am I part of this family, contributing to its life, or do I just happen to come here?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• helping with events, cleaning, etc.;</li> <li>• being interested &amp; informed (weekly sheet, magazine, minutes, notice board);</li> <li>• giving generously my time, talents, money;</li> <li>• coming to events...;</li> </ul>	<p><i>"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, and teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you."</i>  <i>Matthew 28,19.20</i></p> <p>Do I ever talk about God, Christ, prayer, church, faith? Do I live accordingly?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offering others to pray for them;</li> <li>• sharing with them church leaflets;</li> <li>• mentioning the importance of God, prayer, faith in my life;</li> <li>• starting my witness in my own family...;</li> </ul>

...just a few examples; there is so much more in every group! Let's do just **one** thing from **one** group every day! **One** thing from **two** groups every week! **One** thing from all **five** groups every month! - and it will make a huge difference!

## Eileen Galling BCA

*Jeanne James writes:*



I recently spent a very enjoyable hour with one of our much loved members of the congregation. As soon she welcomed me into her living room it was easy to see that Eileen is always busy. She had some knitting at her side and there was some unfinished cross stitch nearby. There was also a pile of knitted bags which she had been stitching together. All of these crafts she intends to donate to charity for the good of others.

Eileen was born in Torquay and was brought up with her 3 brothers and sister in Paignton. Eileen was involved with scouting and guiding since she was 7 years old. She made her church promises and was confirmed

at the age of 10 and made her Guide promises when she was 11.

At the age of 16 she joined the Cub Scouts as a helper and at the tender age of 17 she became a scout leader. She recalls how once she was in charge of thirty-six 11 year old boy scouts (helped only by 2 young lads). She was responsible for taking them on a train from Paignton to Dartmouth to a fairground. She cheerily pointed out that it wouldn't be allowed these days.

She met her late husband Maurice in 1962 in Newquay. Eileen worked in Exeter and Maurice, who was in the RAF, was posted to Aden in Yemen.

When Maurice was demobbed from the air force at Chivenor in September 1974, he and Eileen moved to Weymouth. Maurice joined the Atomic Energy Police in October 1974. They brought up their 3 daughters Paula, Helen and Donna in Weymouth. Eileen has lived for 50 years in the same house.

Eileen used to go to the British Legion. She was invited to a party where she got chatting about the RAF and the police. She was then invited to the Airforce Club in Weymouth where an officer's wife asked if Eileen would help her with an RAF stall she was running. She agreed to help on the stall and as she tended to stay all day at the club helping, she was asked to take over the running of the stall.

When Maurice died Eileen joined the club committee as secretary. She did this for a year and at the AGM she was asked to be branch secretary which of course she agreed to (as she can't say no).

At the RAF club there was a room downstairs (which was once used as a Navy prison). The room was refurbished and was later used as a common/conference room. It was suggested that the room could be used to serve coffee on Battle of Britain Day. The club grew as people brought a lot of things to sell and Eileen used to hand out leaflets and highlight the benefits of joining the club. She met a lot of newcomers to the club in this way.

During Battle of Britain Week Eileen would be on the town bridge with her stall, collecting for the club.

When she fell ill she spent 3 months in Dorchester hospital and 2 months in Southampton where she had open heart surgery. She was discharged from hospital on the day before Armistice Day. Eileen, being as dedicated as she always has been, was taken by her grandson to the seafront on Armistice Day. As no-one from the Airforce club arrived to lay the wreath, Eileen's grandson laid it.

Eileen decided to finish with the club to be a fundraising leader for Leicester RAF Welfare which she has done for the last 11 years. They send her all the merchandise to sell. While she was at Conference in Birmingham she met some armourers so she joined the Armourers Club. She proudly showed me the armourer's mug, T shirt and book she was presented with. She was recently invited to the AGM Gala Dinner in Kings Lynn.

Eileen was awarded the British Citizen's Award in July 2016 for her dedication over the years to the Cubs and the Royal Air Force. She modestly didn't want to dwell on that accolade.

When I asked her how she manages to have the energy and stamina to do all that she does, she gave a shrug of her shoulders, in her own familiar way, and chuckled as she said with great certainty that she has help. Help from God.

(The whole time that we were chatting, Gismo, Eileen's lovely cat, sat outside on the windowsill keeping an eye on proceedings).

## The sleeping Saints of Turkey

by Dawn Bentner (for CWR)



Who would believe that the region now known as Turkey has more Saints than most other countries of the world? While Turkey is not a Christian nation now, its past is rich with holy Christian men and women.

Although the Republic of Türkiye —Turkey’s official name—does not have an official state

religion, the overwhelming majority of the Turkish population are counted as followers of Islam. Islam has been the dominant religion in this region since at least the eleventh century, and today only a small percentage of the population are Jewish or Christian.

Despite the dearth of Catholics in Turkey today, the minority of Catholics who live there can boast of 770 saints from their past. Of that number, 660 died as martyrs.

Those martyrs include recent ones, such as Blessed Ignazio Maloyan and other victims of the Armenian genocide of 1915. During the Roman persecution of the Church more than a thousand years earlier, many other Christians died as martyrs for their faith; both groups are described here.

Martyrdom among Turkish Christians has occurred in other centuries too. For example, many faithful Christians were executed during the eighth and ninth centuries when Byzantine emperors forcibly imposed the heresy of iconoclasm on their citizens.

But not all Turkish martyrs died in large groups. Saint Christopher, the one who, according to the famous legend, gave up serving the devil to serve the King of Kings, died in ancient Lycia (the modern provinces of Antalya and Muğla in Turkey). The legendary Saint George (who killed a dragon), Saint Margaret (who also killed a dragon), Saint Blaise (who saved a

choking boy through his prayers and so on whose day the throats of the faithful are blessed), Saint Barbara (who was locked up in a tower), and Saint Pantaleon (who was a doctor) are all said to have died in Turkey. Even the famous Saint Nicholas of Santa Claus fame was the bishop of the Turkish city of Myra, now known as Demre.

The New Testament lists many Turkish saints. The Apostle Philip is said to have been martyred in Turkey (although other sources say he died in Greece), and some traditions say Saint Luke the Evangelist was born there. Saint Timothy, to whom the Apostle Paul wrote two letters, was the bishop of Ephesus, near modern Selçuk. Saint Paul also refers to Saint Epaphras, who was one of his traveling companions, in his letters; Paul identifies Epaphras as being from Colossae, an ancient city near modern Honaz. Saints Agabus and Manaen were prophets and leaders of the Church in Antioch (now Antakya).

The early Church in Turkey boasts many holy bishops, such as Saint Acacius of Amida (modern Diyarbakır), who organized the faithful to care for several thousand Persians who had been captured by the Roman army and who were starving. Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus (whose latter name means “wonderworker”) was the third century bishop of Neocaesarea (modern Niksar) and was well known during his lifetime for the miracles that resulted from his prayers.

The early Church can boast of many holy Turkish monks and hermits as well. Saint John the Silent was a sixth century monk who was famous for, you guessed it, remaining silent. John had been named a bishop, but he felt called to the seclusion of monastic life instead and snuck away to live as a humble monk. He told no one his secret for years. Saint Simeon the Stylite was a fifth century hermit who lived for decades on top of a column (stylite) in the wilderness as a penance; many people sought him out to listen to him preach.

The great city of Constantinople may be known as Istanbul now, but an impressive number of patriarchs of that city have been named saints. Saint John Chrysostom, who was a preacher, martyr, and Doctor of the Church, is certainly the most famous patriarch of this city. Other patriarchs of Constantinople who are considered saints include: Alexander, Anatolius, Antony Kauleas, Cyrus, Eutychius, Flavian, Ignatius, Germanus I, Menas, Methodius I, Metrophanes, Nicephorus, Paul I, Peter Thomas, Proclus, and Tarasius.

Saints Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great were close friends and bishops of Turkey, and both have been named Doctors of the Church because of their brilliant and influential writings.



Two other Turkish Doctors of the Church include Saint Gregory of Narek, a tenth century priest, monk, and poet, and Saint Ephraem, a fourth century deacon, poet, and mystic who died in Edessa (modern Urfa).

Saints Basil and Gregory grew up in devout families, so devout that many of their family members were also recognized as saints after their deaths. For example, Saint Basil's parents and four of his siblings are considered saints. Saint Gregory's mother, sister, and brother are all recognized as saints.

Other inspirational Turkish female saints include Saint Olympiada. After she was left a widow in fourth century Nicomedia (modern İzmit), Olympiada founded an orphanage, a hospital, and a religious order of nuns. Saint Pulcheria was a Byzantine princess in the fifth century, served as regent for her brother for a time, and later entered into a chaste marriage for the sake of political stability. Her personal devotion and her protection of the Church had long-lasting effects throughout the empire. Saint Anthusa was a Byzantine princess who lived in the eighth century, and she used her influence to support monasteries and those who were poor.

Perhaps the most unusual Turkish saints are those commonly known as the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. These seven men died as martyrs during the early days of the Church and were buried in a cave (*see the photo*). When their bodies were rediscovered many years later, Christians honoured them as martyrs and began calling them the "Seven Sleepers of Ephesus", drawing on the New Testament expression of referring to the dead as those who had "fallen asleep". A more colourful legend claims that the seven men survived for two centuries in their cave, like the fictional Rip Van Winkle, before they were discovered. And then they died.

As Christians, we know that the holy example of so many great saints from Turkey—along with the blood that so many of them shed for Christ—must bear fruit eventually. Even though the tiny minority of Christians in Turkey are often hidden today, the power of the Gospel can quietly transform lives, one soul at a time. Today we Christians can hope that Christian faith is simply sleeping in the hearts of the Turkish people, waiting for their holy ancestors to lead them back to Jesus Christ.



**Calendar, Service times,  
and Prayer Intentions**

**Anniversaries of death**

**Order of Morning and Evening Prayer**

## Calendar for April 2024

MON	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>MONDAY IN EASTER OCTAVE</b>	10am
TUE	2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>TUESDAY IN EASTER OCTAVE</b>	10am
WED	3 <sup>rd</sup>	WEDNESDAY IN EASTER OCTAVE	10am
THU	4 <sup>th</sup>	THURSDAY IN EASTER OCTAVE	6pm
FRI	5 <sup>th</sup>	FRIDAY IN EASTER OCTAVE	12pm
SAT	6 <sup>th</sup>	SATURDAY IN EASTER OCTAVE	9.30am
SUN	7 <sup>th</sup>	<b>WHITE (or LOW) SUNDAY</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	8 <sup>th</sup>	<b>ANNUNCIATION</b>	10am, 6pm
TUE	9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	9am
WED	10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	10am
THU	11 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St. Leo the Great, Pope</b>	6pm
FRI	12 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	12pm
SAT	13 <sup>th</sup>	St. Hermenegild, Martyr	9.30am
SUN	14 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	15 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	9am
TUE	16 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	9am
WED	17 <sup>th</sup>	<b>SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH</b>	10am
THU	18 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
FRI	19 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	12pm
SAT	20 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Monthly Requiem</i>	9.30am
SUN	21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Sts. Soter & Caius Popes, Martyrs	9am
TUE	23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>ST. GEORGE MARTYR</b>	9am
WED	24 <sup>th</sup>	St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Martyr	10am
THU	25 <sup>th</sup>	ST. MARK EVANGELIST (Rogation)	6pm
FRI	26 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Sts. Cletus, Marcellinus, Anacletus Popes, Mart.</i>	12pm
SAT	27 <sup>th</sup>	St. Peter Canisius	9.30am
SUN	28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EASTER</b>	10.30am, 5pm
MON	29 <sup>th</sup>	St. Peter of Verona, Martyr	9am
TUE	30 <sup>th</sup>	<b>St. Catherine of Siena</b>	9am

## Daily Intentions



*Anniversaries of death*

*We pray for/with...*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Our Parish - *Henry Biles*
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Our Parish
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Refugees - *Louise Whitham, John Cheeseman*
- 4<sup>th</sup> Priests, vocations
- 5<sup>th</sup> Dying - *Dora Bussey*
- 6<sup>th</sup> Shrine of Walsingham - *George Thomas, Maureen Tranter*
  
- 7<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Joan Malbam*
- 8<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Bill Turner*
- 9<sup>th</sup> Family members - *Lawton Grainger, Richard Clarke*
- 10<sup>th</sup> PCC - *Dennis Robinson, Betty Barrett*
- 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Air Force (founded 1 April 1918)
- 12<sup>th</sup> Our Servers
- 13<sup>th</sup> Cell of O.L.W. - *Peter Biles*
  
- 14<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Leslie Butler, David Hoskins*
- 15<sup>th</sup> Our choir and organists
- 16<sup>th</sup> S.P.O.T. - *Parry Evans, Jennifer Lampard*
- 17<sup>th</sup> Fathers (family, foster, spiritual) - *Doris Bailey, William Waight*
- 18<sup>th</sup> Those who do not know Christ - *Ted Honebon, Iris Hooper*
- 19<sup>th</sup> Politicians - *John Riggs*
- 20<sup>th</sup> Departed - *Maurice Robinson*
  
- 21<sup>st</sup> Our Parish - *Pat Turner*
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Peace
- 23<sup>rd</sup> H.M. The King & The Royal Family - *Jim Warmesley*
- 24<sup>th</sup> Seat of Oswestry
- 25<sup>th</sup> Those who hunger - *Molly Holland, James Cocks*
- 26<sup>th</sup> Sick
- 27<sup>th</sup> Those celebrating marital milestones - *Mabel Gerhardt*
  
- 28<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Darin Lam; John, Jean, & Scott Anderson, Margaret Taylor*
- 29<sup>th</sup> Persecuted Christians 28<sup>th</sup>: *Alice Jenkins, Frederick Legg*
- 30<sup>th</sup> Our Benefactors - *Hazel Macauley, Max Hetherington*

*If there are names missing from the list or you want to add names, please, talk to the Vicar.*

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless thy holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding and kindle my affections; that I may worthily, attentively, and devoutly recite this Morning Prayer, and so be meet to be heard before the presence of thy divine Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### MORNING PRAYER

Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia. He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia. As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia. Pour for us to him thy prayer, alleluia.

**V.** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

**R.** For the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

**V.** Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world: grant, we beseech thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

**V.** O Lord, open my lips. **R.** And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

**V.** O God, make speed to save me. **R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

**V.** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**R.** As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

**V.** Let us rejoice in the Lord; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him!

**R.** The Lord is risen, indeed, alleluia.

**V.** For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his.

**R.** Alleluia.

**V.** The sea is his, for who but he made it; and his hands fashioned the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord who made us! For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

**R.** The Lord is risen, indeed, alleluia.

**V.** Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, and put me to the test, and they saw my works.

**R.** Alleluia.

V. For forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: They always err in heart, they have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath: they shall not enter my rest.

R. The Lord is risen, indeed, alleluia.

V. 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.

R. Alleluia.

### HYMN

O thou, the heavens' eternal King,  
Creator, unto thee we sing,  
With God the Father ever One,  
Co-equal, co-eternal Son.

Thy hand, when first the world began,  
Made in thine own pure image man,  
And linked to Adam, sprung from earth,  
A living soul of heavenly birth.

And when by craft the envious foe  
Had marred thy noblest work below,  
Clothed in our flesh, thou didst restore  
The image thou hadst made before.

Once wast thou born of Mary's womb;  
And now, newborn from out the tomb,  
O Christ, thou bidd'st us rise with thee  
From death to immortality.

Eternal Shepherd, thou dost lave  
Thy flock in pure baptismal wave,  
That mystic bath, that grave of sin,  
Where ransomed souls new life begin.

Redeemer, thou for us didst deign  
To hang upon the Cross of pain,  
And give for us the lavish price  
Of thine own blood in sacrifice.

Grant, Lord, in thee each faithful mind  
Unceasing paschal joy may find;  
And from the death of sin set free  
Souls newly born to life by thee.

To thee, once dead, who now dost live,  
All glory, Lord, thy people give,  
Whom, with the Father, we adore,  
And Holy Ghost forevermore. Amen.

*The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:*

1	Psalm 117	Exodus 12,1-14 1 Corinthians 15,1-11	5	115	Exodus 13,17 - 14,14 1 Corinthians 15,35-50
2	112	Exodus 12,14-36 1 Corinthians 15,12-19	6	116	Exodus 14,15-end 1 Corinthians 15,51-end
3	149	Exodus 12,37-end 1 Corinthians 15,20-28	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b> v. <b>20-31</b>	<b>Isaiah 53,6-12</b> <b>Romans 4,13-25</b>
4	114	Exodus 13,1-16 1 Corinthians 15,29-34	8	111, 113	1 Samuel 2,1-10 Romans 5,12-end

9	8	Exodus 15,22 - 16,10 Colossians 1,15-end	20	110	Exodus 29,1-9 Luke 2,21-40
10	30	Exodus 16,11-end Colossians 2,1-15	<b>21</b>	<b>119</b> v. 89-96	<b>Nehemiah 7,73 - 8,12</b> <b>Luke 24,25-32</b>
11	28	Exodus 17 Colossians 2,16 - 3,11	22	44	Exodus 32,1-14 Luke 2,41-end
12	61	Exodus 18,1-12 Colossians 3,12-end	23	5, 146	Joshua 1,1-9 Ephesians 6,10-20
13	84	Exodus 18,13-end Colossians 4	24	135	Exodus 33 Luke 3,15-22
<b>14</b>	<b>77</b> v. 11-20	<b>Isaiah 63,7-15</b> <b>1 Corinthians 10,1-13</b>	25	148	Isaiah 62,6-10 Acts 12,25 - 13,13
15	96	Exodus 19 Luke 1,1-25	26	33	Exodus 35,20-end Luke 4,14-30
16	98	Exodus 20,1-21 Luke 1,26-38	27	34	Exodus 40,17-end Luke 4,31-37
17	105	Exodus 24 Luke 1,39-56	<b>28</b>	<b>44 v.</b> <b>16-end</b>	<b>2 Maccabees 7,7-14</b> <b>Hebrews 11,32 - 12,2</b>
18	136	Exodus 25,1-22 Luke 1,57-end	29	145	Numbers 9,15-end Luke 4,38-end
19	107	Exodus 28,29-38 Luke 2,1-20	30	19	Numbers 11,1-33 Luke 5,1-11

*Each reading ends with these words:*

**V.** This is the word of the Lord.

**R.** Thanks be to God.

## BENEDICTUS

*Ant:* Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples and said to them: Peace to you, alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, \*  
who has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, \*  
born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old \*  
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,  
To show mercy to our ancestors, \*  
and to remember his holy covenant.  
This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: \*  
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
Free to worship him without fear, \*  
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.  
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, \*  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
To give his people knowledge of salvation \*  
by the forgiveness of all their sins.  
In the tender compassion of our God \*  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, \*  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
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.

*Ant:* Jesus stood in the midst of his disciples and said to them: Peace to you, alleluia, alleluia.

*V. Let us pray. – **Intercessions** are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (the world), for those in need, and for the dead. Then follows the Collect:*

Almighty God, on this day you overcame death through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly beseech you, that, as by your grace you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

*V.* Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life.  
R. Amen.  
V. Let us bless the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.  
R. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.  
V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.  
R. Amen.

## EVENING PRAYER

Joy to thee, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia. He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluia. As he promised, hath arisen, alleluia. Pour for us to him thy prayer, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.  
R. For the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ didst vouchsafe to give joy to the world: grant, we beseech thee, that through His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O God, make speed to save me.  
R. O Lord, make haste to help me.  
V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

## HYMN

The Lamb's high banquet we await  
In snow-white robes of royal state,  
And now, the Red Sea's channel past,  
To Christ our Prince we sing at last.

Upon the altar of the Cross  
His Body has redeemed our loss,  
And tasting of his precious Blood,  
Our life is hid with Christ in God.

That Paschal eve God's arm was bared,  
The devastating angel spared;  
By strength of hand our hosts went free  
From Pharaoh's ruthless tyranny.

Now Christ our Passover is slain,  
The Lamb of God that knows no stain,  
And he, the true unleavened Bread,  
Is truly our oblation made.

O thou from whom hell's monarch flies,  
O great, O very Sacrifice,  
Thy captive people are set free,  
And endless life restored in thee.

For Christ, arising from the dead,  
From conquered hell victorious sped,  
He thrusts the tyrant down to chains,  
And Paradise for man regains.



Maker of all, to thee we pray,  
 Fulfil in us thy joy today;  
 When death assails, grant, Lord, that we  
 May share thy Paschal victory.

To thee who, dead, again dost live,  
 All glory, Lord, thy people give,  
 All glory to the Father be  
 And spirit blest, eternally. Amen.

*The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:*

1	Psalm 135	Song of Solomon 1 Mark 16,1-8	<b>14</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 7,7-13</b> <b>Revelation 2,1-11</b>
2	136	Song of Solomon 2 Luke 24,1-12	15	61	Deuteronomy 5,1-22 Ephesians 1,1-14
3	105	Song of Solomon 3 Matthew 28,16-end	16	71	Deuteronomy 5,22-end Ephesians 1,15-end
4	106	Song of Solomon 5 Luke 7,11-17	17	72	Deuteronomy 6 Ephesians 2,1-10
5	107	Song of Solomon 7 Luke 8,41-end	18	73	Deuteronomy 7,1-11 Ephesians 2,11-end
6	145	Song of Solomon 8 John 11,17-44	19	77	Deuteronomy 7,12-end Ephesians 3,1-13
<b>7</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>Wisdom 9,1-12</b> <b>Galatians 4,1-5</b>	20	27	Deuteronomy 8 Ephesians 3,14-end
8	131, 146	Isaiah 52,1-12 Hebrews 2,5-end	<b>21</b>	<b>81 v.</b> <b>8-16</b>	<b>Exodus 16,4-15</b> <b>Revelation 2,12-17</b>
9	104	Deuteronomy 1,19-40 John 20,11-18	22	111, 116	Jeremiah 15,15-end Hebrews 11,32-end
10	33	Deuteronomy 3,18-end John 20,19-end	23	3, 11	Isaiah 43,1-7 John 15,1-8
11	34	Deuteronomy 4,1-14 John 21,1-14	24	47	Deuteronomy 10,12-end Ephesians 5,1-14
12	118	Deuteronomy 4,15-31 John 21,15-19	25	45	Ezekiel 1,4-14 2 Timothy 4,1-11
13	66	Deuteronomy 4,32-40 John 21,20-end	26	36	Deuteronomy 12,1-14 Ephesians 6,1-9

27	84	Deuteronomy 15,1-18 Ephesians 6,10-end	29	105	Deuteronomy 16,1-20 1 Peter 1,1-12
<b>28</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>Isaiah 60,1-14</b> <b>Revelation 3,1-13</b>	30	97	Deuteronomy 17, 8-end 1 Peter 1,13-end

*Each reading ends with these words:*

**V.** This is the word of the Lord.

**R.** Thanks be to God.

### MAGNIFICAT

*Ant:* I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go away, and come again unto you, alleluia, and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,+  
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;\*  
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed;+  
the Almighty has done great things for me\*  
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,\*  
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm\*  
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,

Casting down the mighty from their thrones\*  
and lifting up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things\*  
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,\*  
to remember his promise of mercy,

The promise made to our ancestors,\*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.

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.

*Ant:* I will not leave you orphans, alleluia; I go away, and come again unto you, alleluia, and your heart shall rejoice, alleluia.

V. Let us pray. – *Intercessions* are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (world), for those in need, our Benefactors, and for the dead. Then the Collect is said:

Almighty God, on this day you overcame death through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly beseech you, that, as by your grace you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord, alleluia, alleluia.

R. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen.

*Optional private prayer to be said after Evening Prayer:* To the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, to the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a Virgin, and to the holiness of all the Saints be ascribed everlasting praise, honour, and glory, by all creatures, and to us be granted the forgiveness of all our sins, world without end. Amen.



## EASTER PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for your graciousness has provided a living hope for us in the resurrection of your Son. Clear our minds and hearts of all that distracts us from you. Gird us for action and enable us to master ourselves. Teach our hearts how to believe in you with conviction and our lips how to praise you with sincerity. Then, on the last day, bring us to justification and salvation in the joy of our own resurrection. For you are indeed our God, and we give you glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: now and forever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

## PASCHAL HOURS (ORTHODOX PRAYER FOR EASTER)

Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life.

Having beheld the resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One. We worship Thy cross, O Christ, and Thy holy Resurrection we hymn and glorify; for Thou art our God, and we know none other beside Thee, and we call upon Thy name. O come, all ye faithful, let us worship Christ's holy Resurrection, for behold, through the Cross joy hath come to all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, we hymn His Resurrection; for, having endured crucifixion, He hath destroyed death by death.

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of hell. And didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women: Rejoice! And giving peace unto Thine apostles: Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

In the grave bodily, but in hell with Thy soul as God: in Paradise with the thief, and on the throne with the Father and the Spirit wast Thou Who fillest all things, O Christ the Inexpressible.

How life-giving, how much more beautiful than Paradise, and truly more resplendent than any royal palace was Thy tomb shown to be, O Christ, the source of our resurrection.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Mary, O sanctified and divine tabernacle of the Most High, rejoice! For through thee, O God-bearer, joy is given to them that cry: Blessed art thou among women, O all-spotless Lady. More honourable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, for the sake of the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, of our holy and God-bearing fathers, and of all the saints, have mercy on us. Amen.

May Christ our true God, Who rose from the dead, and trampled down death by death and on those in the tombs bestowed life, through the intercession of His most Pure Mother, and of all the saints have mercy on us and save us, for He is good and the Lover of mankind.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## From the Book of Common Prayer

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Easter:** *ALMIGHTY God, who shewest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness: Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This ancient Collect assumes greater meaning if we remember that Easter Eve is one of the great occasions for Baptisms, for the admittance of converts into the fellowship of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church by joining the local congregation. So this Prayer was used in the ancient Church a few weeks after many new members were in her fellowship.

The first part of the Collect, where we remember in God's presence aspects of his relation to the world, recalls that God in Christ Jesus as the Good Shepherd seeks the lost sheep and, further, as the Light of the world gives to lost travellers light to find their way to everlasting salvation. Does He not enlighten those who have been baptized in the Triune Name, who repent of sin, believe the Gospel and follow the Lord Jesus? Yes! In the Gospel reading the coming of the Lord to his disciples is a source of great joy and encouragement.

The petition in the Collect has a primary reference to the newly baptized, but also applies to all the baptized. All are called to die daily to sin and to live unto righteousness in the power of the Holy Ghost. All Christians are called to holiness of life and consecration unto the Lord and his purposes, and thus they are to think and do only that which they know to be a part of his will for them.

The verb, to eschew, emphasizes that baptised believers are to shoo away, to drive away (as birds from a fruit tree) all that is evil and contrary to holiness in their lives. And this is what is called for in the Epistle reading - as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh.

In Baptism we promise to reject the world, the flesh and the devil and to accept and follow Christ in the way of self-denial and of grace. This Collect thus recalls us to our vocation as the elect people of God, saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Rev'd Dr Peter Toon (+2009)

**Saint of the month:**  
**St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin & Doctor of the Church**

*31 April*

Though she lived her life in a faith experience and spirituality far different from that of our own time, St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) stands as a companion with us on the Christian journey in her undivided effort to invite the Lord to take flesh in her own life. Events which might make us wince or chuckle or even yawn fill her biographies: a mystical experience at six, childhood betrothal to Christ, stories of harsh asceticism, her frequent ecstatic visions. The value of her life for us today lies in her recognition of holiness as a goal to be sought constantly and tirelessly over the course of a lifetime. She is the Patron Saint of Europe, Italy, nurses, the sick, and those ridiculed for their piety and is invoked against fires, miscarriages, and temptations.

St. Catherine was the 23<sup>rd</sup> (!) child of her loving parents, Jacopo and Lapa Benincasa, in the thriving city of Siena, Italy. Her twin, as well as half of her twenty-four siblings, did not survive infancy. She grew up as an intelligent, cheerful, and intensely religious person. Indeed, she was given the nickname “Euphrosyne,” which means “joy”. Catherine disappointed her mother by cutting off her hair as a protest against being overly encouraged to improve her appearance in order to attract a husband. Her father ordered her to be left in peace, and she was given a room of her own for prayer and meditation.

At the age of five, she would climb the stairs in her home on her knees as she prayed the Hail Mary on each step. At the age of six, while she was out walking with her brother, she had the first of many visions. She saw Jesus, sitting on a throne, crowned as King, surrounded by Saints Peter, Paul, and John. This supernatural experience drew Catherine even more deeply into a life of childhood prayer, penance, and devotion.

She entered the Dominican Third Order at 18 and spent the next three years in seclusion, prayer, and austerity. The Third Order was made up of lay people who wore a religious habit but lived at home and worked in the world rather than in a cloister. They served the poor and sick and performed charitable works.

Gradually, a group of followers gathered around her - men and women, priests and religious. An active public apostolate grew out of her contemplative life. Her influence reached great heights because of her evident holiness. She made a deep impression on the Pope who often asked for her advice. St. Cathrine worked tirelessly for peace and for the unity of the

Church, writing hundreds of letters to kings, queens, nobility, religious, and priests. She also wrote often to the Pope(s).

A dominant focus of her letters to the Pope was to urge him to return to Rome. At that time, the papacy had moved to Avignon, France, which became the cause of much internal Church conflict. Anti-popes were elected and confusion was widespread. Catherine knew that the Holy Father needed to return to the Eternal City to end the chaos. Her letters were not only directed to the Holy Father with the affection and sincerity of a loving spiritual daughter, they were also firm, direct, and challenging. In one letter to Pope Gregory XI, she wrote urging him to return to Rome: “*I tell you, father in Christ Jesus, come swiftly like a gentle lamb. Respond to the Holy Spirit Who calls you. I tell you, Come, come, come, and do not wait for time, since time does not wait for you.*” The Pope listened and returned to Rome in 1377, ending the “Avignon-captivity” and division of the Church.

Around the age of twenty-one, she entered into what would later be described as “mystical marriage” with our Lord. While praying, Jesus appeared to her, along with the Virgin Mary and King David as a harpist. Jesus placed a ring on her finger and departed. The ring remained for the rest of her life, although Catherine was the only one who could see it. While in Pisa in 1375, Catherine fell into ecstasy and received the gift of stigmata. She saw a vision of our crucified Lord and rays of light extended from Jesus’ body to hers, piercing her through. In great humility, she begged the Lord to hide the stigmata and so these stigmata appeared physically on her body only after her death, as yet another sign of her holiness.

After receiving the gift of spiritual marriage and of the stigmata, Catherine began a more active ministry to the poor, sick, and imprisoned of Siena. When the bubonic plague—“Black Death”—struck Siena, Catherine and her companions remained hard at work, caring for those affected.

St. Catherine ranks high among the mystics and spiritual writers of the Church. In 1939, she and Francis of Assisi were declared co-patrons of Italy. Pope Paul VI named her and Teresa of Avila doctors of the Church in 1970 — the first women to receive this title.

Her last, and perhaps greatest, gift to the Church was her book entitled, *The Dialogue of Divine Providence*. It is believed that this book was dictated by Catherine while she remained in ecstasy. It is a conversation between a soul and the Father in Heaven. In addition to this great spiritual masterpiece, 382 of her letters and twenty-six of her prayers have survived. A small curiosity about her prayer life: as Catherine would pray the Psalms in her breviary, she would say, “*Glory be to the Father, and to You, and to the Holy Spirit.*” She was praying to Jesus, and she knew he was right there with her.

Saint Catherine was one of the greatest and most influential saints in the history of the Church. In her lifetime she had a powerful impact upon those she encountered. In her death, she continues to have a profound impact upon the Church as a Doctor of the Church. None of that would have been possible had she not engaged in fervent prayer and penance throughout her life. Let us, then, ponder our own prayer life as we honour her, and let us strive to imitate her burning love for her Lord. That love, fuelled by a unquenchable desire for God, is beautifully seen in the following prayer that she herself wrote:

*Eternal God, eternal Trinity, you are a mystery as deep as the sea; the more I search, the more I find, and the more I find, the more I search for You. But I can never be satisfied; what I receive will ever leave me desiring more. When You fill my soul, I have an ever greater hunger, and I grow more famished for Your light. I desire above all to see You, the true Light, as You really are. Amen.*

Pope Benedict said during his visit to St. Catherine's house: "Like the Sienese saint, every believer feels the need to be conformed with the sentiments of the heart of Christ to love God and his neighbour as Christ himself loves. And we can all let our hearts be transformed and learn to love like Christ in a familiarity with him that is nourished by prayer, by meditation on the Word of God and by the sacraments, above all by receiving Holy Communion frequently and with devotion. Dear brothers and sisters, the Eucharist is an extraordinary gift of love that God continually renews to nourish our journey of faith, to strengthen our hope and to inflame our charity, to make us more and more like him."

What does St. Catherine teach modern Christians? That we are not bound by the faults and failures of the culture, and we are more than the corruption we see in our Church. She shows us that we are loved unmeasurably by our God who created us to stand in courage and truth, and that no matter our status, position, gender, or ability, through our holiness Christ can transform the whole world. Quotes from St. Catherine:

- *"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire."*
- *"Proclaim the truth and do not be silent through fear."*
- *"Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring."*
- *"The soul is in God and God is in the soul. God is closer to us than water is to a fish."*
- *"What is it you want to change? Your hair, your face, your body? Why? For God is in love with all those things and he might weep when they are gone."*
- *"We are such value to God that he came to live among us and to guide us home. He will go to any length to seek us, even to being lifted high upon the cross to draw us back to himself. We can only respond by loving God for his love."*



## On the “Alleluia”

*From the writings of St. Jerome and from other sources*

St. Jerome (347-420) observed that in the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria the *Alleluia* was sung at certain times, and he loved it so much that he convinced Pope Damasus that it should likewise be sung in Rome and in the Western (Latin) Church.

During Eastertide Alleluia does become rather prominent when we sing it repeatedly; it is added to almost everything. The Church, during the fifty days of Easter celebration, pours forth a joyous flood of alleluias — indeed, like water flowing from the temple — enacting with potent literalness the well-known line from St. Augustine Bishop: “*we are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song.*” Holy Mother Church, the immaculate bride, cannot contain her joy at the resurrection of her Lord, and so sings this word of jubilation whenever and wherever she can.

The word *Alleluia* (sometimes written “Hallelujah”) is rooted in a Hebrew expression that means “praise the Lord.” In the Bible it is found most often as a type of antiphon that is repeated at the end of the Psalms. It is also found in the book of Tobit, where it is referenced as a hymn of praise to be sung in the new Jerusalem: “*The gates of Jerusalem shall be built of sapphire, and of emerald, and all the walls thereof round about of precious stones. All its streets shall be paved with white and clean stones: and Alleluia shall be sung in its streets*” (Tobit 13,22).

Not surprisingly it is also found in the Apocalypse or Revelation, the book describing worship in heaven. We read:

*“I heard as it were the voice of much people in heaven, saying: Alleluia. Salvation, and glory, and power is to our God. For true and just are his judgments [...] And again they said: Alleluia. And the four and twenty ancients, and the four living creatures fell down and adored God that sitteth upon the throne, saying: Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out from the throne, saying: Give praise to our God, all ye his servants; and you that fear him, little and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord our God the Almighty hath reigned. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to him”* (Revelation 19,1-7).

Here at St. Paul’s we bury [an inscription of] the Alleluia (an ancient custom) on the Saturday before Septuagesima Sunday in the place which, then, will be used as the Holy Sepulchre during Good Friday and Holy Saturday just to find it there and to solemnly take it back in procession to the High Altar after the Easter Vigil service as symbol of our Easter joy and hope.

## Chrism Mass in Exeter Cathedral



On (well, *around*, if you have more than one to do) Maundy Thursday Bishops celebrate a special Mass called Chrism Mass. Chrism is a word of Greek origins deriving from the verb “to anoint”. Indeed, the name Christ means “Anointed”. As Chrism is the most sacred oil (as it is consecrated rather than simply blessed), the whole Mass is named after this sacred balm.

Chrism Mass is always a wonderful occasion for the Bishop to meet his flock and a great time of fellowship. As every year, this year, too, a good number of people attended the Chrism Mass in Exeter Cathedral celebrated by the Bishop of Oswestry. The Mass started at 11am and was made most solemn by the presence of a great number of priests and faithful and by a wonderful choir. At 1pm a lavish, rich buffet-style lunch was offered by the Bishop to all those present with drinks. We regathered at 2pm for a short but most interesting *catechesis* (teaching) from the Bishop on the symbolism and meaning of Holy Oils — how, together with Christ, they were foreshadowed in the Old Testament — and their importance in our Christian lives. Being anointed by Holy Chrism means to be both strong and joyful in our witness. Finally Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament followed at 3pm and then we all returned home after a wonderful day.

We used this occasion to give Bishop Paul a cheque for £450 — the amount you all very generously raised after his visit to St. Paul’s in January — towards his Missionary Fund. The Bishop was most impressed by the amount and asked the Vicar to thank everyone on his behalf.

Let me finish with the message of Bishop Paul to all those under his care. I hope this will encourage even more people to come with us to the Chrism Mass next year.

Beloved Friends! At Mass today, two very important things happen: first, the Deacons and Priests of the See of Oswestry renew their commitment they made on their ordination day to be faithful to the Order of Ministry to which they were admitted, promising to exercise that ministry with reinvigorated zeal for the sake of Christ and his Church.

Secondly, in this Mass, holy oils are blessed (or, in the case of the Oil of Sacred Chrism, consecrated) for use in the administration of the Sacraments for the coming year. These oils are the “tools of the trade” for your priests and for me, your Bishop. And all of this is done in the sight of God’s holy people of whose sanctification these Orders of Ministry and these sacramental oils are given - this is for you and the building up of the Christ’s Mystical Body in faith, hope, and charity.



That is why we make a Festival of it, because our life is always made deeper, wider, and richer when we come together in celebration of the Catholic Faith and to be formed more deeply in it. That is why, after the 11am Mass and a hearty lunch, there will be a time of teaching (we call this “catechesis”) lasting about 25 minutes, and the day concludes with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

My earnest prayer is that today’s Chrism Festival will renew in you a love for the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, and the life that streams to us from him through his Sacred Ministers and the Sacred Old they employ. May we be built up in the Catholic Faith which together we live out confidently in the Church of England for the sake of the whole Church. Open your heart anew to the Lord Jesus today, encounter and receive him anew in this Chrism Festival. May he make you ready to enter the Paschal Mystery of his Passion, Death, and Resurrection from the Dead. Praised be Jesus Christ!

+ Paul, Bishop of Oswestry



## An “Egg-cellent” History - Eggs “to dye” for: Easter Eggs

Easter is the celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ - so where do eggs fit in? Even before Christians, egg was a widely used ancient symbol of fertility and restoration, viewed as a symbol of the regeneration that comes with springtime. Early Christians borrowed this image and applied it not to the regeneration of the earth but rather to Jesus Christ. This was also extended to the new life of the faithful followers of Christ.

The tradition of dyeing and decorating Easter eggs is ancient, and its origin is obscure, but it has been practiced in both the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches since at least the Middle Ages. The strict rules of fasting meant that eggs could not be eaten during Holy Week, but chickens continued to lay eggs during that week regardless... and the notion of specially identifying those as Holy Week eggs brought about their decoration. According to a superstition eggs laid on Good Friday are said to turn into diamonds if they are kept for 100 years...

Traditionally, Easter eggs are dyed throughout the Orthodox Christian world on Holy Thursday, and they are dyed red to represent the redeeming blood of Christ that was shed on the Cross, the white egg (before being dyed) represents the white marble tomb where Christ's body was laid after He was taken down from the Cross, and the hard shell of the egg symbolises the sealed tomb of Christ.



In some places red gave place to all sort of bright and joyful colours. In many cultures eggs are painted with intricate designs and patterns often with religious symbols such as crosses. In some cultures, such as in Ukraine, eggs are dipped in beeswax and then etched to create intricate designs before dyeing them. They can also be decorated by carving intricate designs or using a technique called etching. This involves creating a design by removing the shell's outer layer using acid or a sharp tool. These eggs can be kept for family Easter baskets but are often given as gifts and are highly valued for their beauty and symbolism.

In some parts of England the ‘pace egg’ and pace egg plays are still a living tradition. The word ‘pace’ comes from ‘paschal’, the Latin name for Easter. Pace eggs are hard boiled hen, duck, or goose eggs with a colourful shell. The first mention of pace eggs comes from early 18<sup>th</sup>-century Lancashire.

Fun games quickly developed around Easter eggs both in the Eastern and in the Western Churches (*we all know the Easter Egg hunt*). On Easter Sunday, a ritual of the cracking of the eggs takes place in most Orthodox countries, with people tapping each others' egg, symbolising the 'cracking' of Christ's tomb and the bonds of death and His resurrection.



Fighting with eggs is the most anticipated moment in the Bulgarian Easter tradition. It is a fun experience for everyone. Children and adults fight for their victorious egg with expectations of success and health throughout the year if their egg survives the battles. It works in the following order: each person takes one egg and knocks it against the other person's egg. The only surviving egg from all the knocking is called the "боряк" or in English the "fighter" and is the egg that is kept in the house until next Easter.

The rolling of pace eggs in England is still done in some parts of the country, perhaps to symbolise the rolling away of the stone from Jesus' tomb. It is still a popular and cherished tradition in the White House in the U.S.A. Why not make your own, colourful eggs this year?! You can even use natural things such as coffee, spinach, beet, or red cabbage to dye your eggs.

The great popularity of Easter eggs, of course, influenced the world of baked and sweet goods as well. An especially delicious Easter egg was created, they say, in France and Germany in the early 1800s. Then in 1875, John Cadbury concocted a chocolate Easter egg made with dark chocolate and filled with sugared almonds and piped flowers. Early cream-filled eggs would follow 50 years later, but the cream eggs as we know them would take nearly a century to appear. Now nearly 80 million are sold in the UK each year.

But what would even the most beautiful or most delicious Easter egg be good for without a proper blessing...?! On Easter Day, in many countries people bring their eggs, along with all of the other foods that would be used for their Easter feast to be blessed by the priest. They would bring all of their food in a basket which is where we get the tradition of the Easter basket/ hamper. This blessing was and is a way of expressing gratitude for the abundance of God's blessings. The prayer is as follows: *Lord, let the grace of your blessing come upon these eggs, that they be healthful food for your faithful who eat them in thanksgiving for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.*

## The Harrowing of Hell

by Dale Ahlquist (for the CWR)

Before we talk about the Harrowing of Hell, let's talk about harrowing. A harrow is a sort of heavy field rake, more imposing, that is used to break up heavy soil and remove weeds. It causes distress to the soil.

If someone tells us they have had a harrowing experience, they're talking about being distressed, but they're generally not talking about working in a field. They're talking about being chased by a rabid dog or getting their shoelaces caught in the wheels of a train.

So, what is the Harrowing of Hell? It is a term we do not hear very much these days, and yet it refers to an event that we mention every time we recite the Apostles' Creed: "*He descended into hell ...*" It comes right after "*He was buried,*" – and right before "*On the third day He rose again.*" It is what happened between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. There is no direct reference to it in the Gospels, but the First Epistle of St. Peter clearly says that Jesus "*preached to the spirits in prison,*" (3,19-20) after his death and before he rose from the tomb.

Most theologians argue that the Descent into Hell was to Sheol, the place of the dead, rather than Hell, or the Inferno, Gehenna, the place of the damned. The righteous souls who died before Christ needed to have an encounter with Christ before being released from "prison." Because even though they were righteous, they weren't quite. For as Isaiah says and St. Paul repeats, "*None are righteous, not one.*" They still needed the grace of God which comes only through the Son of God, the Redeemer.

A poem entitled "The Harrowing of Hell" by Orkney poet George Mackay Brown imagines Jesus descending a step at a time and encountering the Old Testament prophets and kings who had anticipated him:

He went down the first step.  
His lantern shone like the morning star.  
Down and round he went  
Clothed in his five wounds.

Solomon whose coat was like daffodils  
Came out of the shadows.  
He kissed Wisdom there, on the second step.

The boy whose mouth had been filled with harp-songs,  
The shepherd king  
Gave, on the third step, his purest cry...

Joseph, harvest-dreamer, counsellor of pharaohs  
Stood on the fourth step.  
He blessed the lingering Bread of Life.

He who had wrestled with an angel,  
The third of the chosen,  
Hailed the King of Angels on the fifth step.

Abel with his flutes and fleeces  
Who bore the first wound  
Came to the sixth step with his pastorals.

On the seventh step down  
The tall primal dust  
Turned with a cry from digging and delving.

Tomorrow the Son of Man will walk in a garden  
Through drifts of apple-blossom.



It would seem at first that term Harrowing of Hell is more a reference to the field action, Jesus pulling souls out of the spiritual soil of the underworld. But why would souls be compared with weeds? Why not the “Harvesting of Hell?” I suggest that The Harrowing of Hell is a deliberate reference to

the Distressing of Hell. Furthermore, I would suggest that before the coming of Christ the souls of the dead were all together, undamned and unredeemed, and were awaiting the resolution of the states of their souls.

What is the distress involved?

It might be distressing to hell when someone comes in and makes things even worse. It might be distressing to hear the Gospel when you are busy cursing God. It might be distressing to suddenly find yourself the presence of Christ ... in hell. You might be a weed getting pulled up and thrown into an everlasting fire.

Perhaps this is why The Harrowing of Hell is depicted in many of the medieval Mystery plays with low brow slapstick humour. In fact, in Florence, in the monastery of San Marco Fra Angelico painted all the frescoes in each monks cell, and one of them depicted The Harrowing of Hell. When Jesus knocks down the door of hell, it comically crushes a demon beneath it.



As for the souls to be saved, there might also be distress in meeting your Saviour while still suffering in your sins. It might be rather fearful to face the One you have offended. But the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. You would be something like a clump of soil being broken up and suddenly made useful.

But it seems it would be most distressing to the one who imagined he was the ruler of this realm of the dead, the adversary who thought he had scored his great victory at the Cross. Hell would certainly be distressed when Jesus showed up and took the souls from Satan that he thought he had. The Lord brought order to the place of the dead.

What did G.K. Chesterton write about the Harrowing of Hell? “It is not always wrong to go down to the lowest promontory and look down on hell. It is when you look up at hell that a serious miscalculation has probably been made...”



### The Three “R”s of the Resurrection

*by Carl E. Olson (for the CWR)*

*“Hidden first in a womb of flesh, he sanctified human birth by his own birth. Hidden afterward in the womb of the earth, he gave life to the dead by his resurrection.”* This beautiful reflection on the Resurrection is from the pen of Hesychius of Jerusalem, a fifth-century priest, monk, and theologian revered in the Eastern churches.



Throughout the Gospels there is much about Christ that is hidden, mysterious, and difficult to comprehend. The disciples are repeatedly depicted as misunderstanding Jesus, in constant need of further explanation about the deeper meaning of His parables and teachings—especially as they related to His approaching Passion, death, and Resurrection. Their three years with Jesus were filled with fits and starts of understanding, as though the light of their Master’s words would sometimes break through and briefly burn away their limited, lacking notions of who He was and what He meant to do.

And yet, until what seemed to be the very end, the glorious, stunning truth about their Master’s death was beyond their grasp. This is evident in the Gospel of St. John. It was Mary of Magdala who went to the tomb “while it was still dark.” Why? Perhaps to mourn. Perhaps she was sent by some of the Apostles. We don’t know for certain. But the mention of darkness is deliberate, pointing as it does to the darkness of vision still afflicting the followers of the Crucified Christ.

Seeing that the stone was moved, Mary Magdalene ran back to Peter and John, “the beloved disciple.” We can surmise that by the time they arrived at the tomb there was some morning light in the sky, for Peter is able to see inside. And yet, the Evangelist points out, “they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.” After they had returned home, it was Mary—“weeping outside the tomb”—who saw the two angels before seeing Jesus, who she initially mistook for a gardener (Jn 20,10-18).

There are, to borrow from the realm of education, three “R’s” that flow in succession here.

First, there is the *reality* of the Resurrection—the fact that, as Peter proclaimed, “this man God raised on the third day.”

Secondly, there is the *reliability* of the witnesses, the men and women who were there and who saw, touched, and spoke with the Risen Lord: “We are witnesses of all that he did.” They gave their life to this truth.

Third, there is the *responsibility* that each of us is given as a follower of Christ. “If then you were raised with Christ,” Paul exhorted the Christians in Colossae, “seek what is above.” That includes living as though there really *is* an “above”—that is, heavenly glory—and not as though this world is all that exists or matters.

“On this day,” wrote Hesychius of Jerusalem, “the divine call is heard, the kingdom is prepared, we are saved and Christ is adored.”

The life-changing, soul-saving reality of Easter is hidden to many. May we, filled with love like Mary Magdalene, Peter, John and all the saints, be light-bearing witnesses to the truth of the Resurrection.

## The Psalms

### *Psalm 36: "With Thee is the Fountain of Life"*

This psalm is divided into two very distinct parts. The first four verses, following the traditions of the Wisdom literature, describes a man who is under the sway of sin. The second half of the psalm is a joyful glorification of the grace and righteousness of God in the form of a hymn or prayer. As the seemingly easy life of the wicked which will, however, end in destruction is described in the first part of Psalm 36, so the blessed happiness of a man whose life is grounded in God emerges from the second part. This poetic structure first draws a dark background against which the radiant picture of God's lovingkindness is set off so much the more impressively.

Psalm 36 is also an attempt to answer a serious question: how can the existence of (a righteous, just, and loving) God be reconciled with the fact and experience of sin? How can wickedness and sin seemingly dominate in a world which is supposed to be ordered and governed by God's grace, justice, and might? Facing this difficult question, indeed, too many have fallen into the trap of denying the existence of God in one way or another. Others, equally mistaken, deny the gravity of sin, the existence of consequences (such as eternal damnation), or, blasphemously, attribute the choice between good and evil not to the free will of man, aided by God's grace, but to God himself (such as extreme forms of double predestination, etc.).

Psalm 36 gives the only answer acceptable: that of faith and hope (trust) in God. This psalm is a beautiful and living testimony to what faith is capable of attaining when *notwithstanding* everything it takes the risk of siding with God. We almost hear the next psalm, Psalm 37, anticipated: "*do not be envious of evil doers...*"

Both the structure and the language of Psalm 36 is very simple and clear. As mentioned above, the description of the wicked under the influence of sin (verses 1-4) is contrasted in verses 5-9 with the praise of God's lovingkindness and with the blessed happiness of a man who lives according to God's grace. Then follows a prayer (verses 10-11) for the continuation of that grace. Finally, in verse 12 the psalmist returns to the initial problem of sin and describes the fate the wicked will suffer on the day of judgement.

**Verses 1-4** — Psalm 36 opens with a shocking and disturbing word: *whisper*. The very same word is used here to describe how sin whispers in the heart of the wicked which is also often used of God in other parts of the Old Testament when he communicates with his prophets. It is clear what the psalmist wants to say: sin and wickedness have the same authority and power

for a sinner that God's mighty Word has for his prophets. Irony, shock, and terror fill this statement.

Irony, because how often we think about sin as our very moment of freedom: I do what I want. Little do we know that it is sin, evil, and wickedness that enslave us in those choices. The sinner foolishly exclaims: "*there is no God*" for him and so he boasts in his imaginary freedom, subjecting himself right away to dark and evil powers and choices. Indeed, there *is* a god for him: his own sin. When God is not accepted as Master and Lord, sin holds its sway. This is what the seeming freedom of a man looks like who believes he can free himself from God.

Sin deludes man to such an extent that he loses every objective measure; he fails to see the wickedness of his own acts, the inevitable destruction he is heading towards, and his own pitiable slavery and misery. This is the shocking and terrifying part of the opening "*whisper*": the satanic element inherent to sin. Sin leads man into a situation entirely different from the one which it had misled him to expect and which he himself had hoped for in his self-deception. Satan, evil, and sin do not keep their promise and never reward anyone who falls into the trap of following them. Such is the miserable state of man without God.

**Verses 5-9** — These verses can be summed up as follows: the ultimate Reality without which life is not possible at all, is God. This is why the psalmist here speaks not of a righteous man but of God and of what he means for man. Only once describing the blessedness God is — or, rather, making an attempt at it as every endeavour to describe God's lovingkindness, faithfulness, and righteousness is bound to remain only a faint attempt —, the psalmist invites all those who believe in God to make a firm decision to side with God. Not in words, but in deeds; in the daily choices of their lives. The subsequent verses are saturated with the warm affection of the heart that rejoices in its own blessed experience of God.

**Verses 10-11** — It is only natural that the profound truth discovered in the previous verses, that is that man can only live by the grace of God, is followed by fervent prayer for the obtaining of and persevering in that very same grace. A beautiful and moving prayer, which every Christian should use frequently and willingly.

**Verse 12** — The concluding verse reverts to the beginning and the terrible seriousness of sin, and its consequences, are clearly exposed. Against this most dark background the blessedness of those who live by God's grace is even more radiant and so the choice is there for everyone who reads Psalm 36: which one to choose. The former is the foolish whisper of sin and evil, the latter is God's gracious call. The choice should be easy.

## Vicar

**Fr Gregory Lipovsky** - vicar@stpaulsweymouth.org - 07796 963703 - The Vicarage, 58 Abbotsbury Road, Weymouth, DT4 0BJ

*The Vicar's day-off is Monday. With enquires about Baptisms, Weddings, Banns, or Funerals, please, contact the Vicar.*

## Assistant Priests

**Fr Tony Ball** - tonyball2008@hotmail.co.uk - 07899 027710

**Fr James Baker** - thevicar@live.com - 07512 591254

St. Paul's	Fleet
<u>Churchwardens</u> <b>Jeanne James</b> jeannejames@uwclub.net 07854 275895 <b>Sharon Waight</b> sharonwaight3@gmail.com 07879 681900	<u>Churchwardens</u> <b>John Coombe</b> john@seabarn.co.uk  <b>Anthea Spearing</b> antheasp@googlemail.com
<u>Parish Office</u> 01305 771217 stpweymouth@gmail.com	<u>Parish Office</u> 01305 782757 geofftaylor919@btinternet.com

## S.P.O.T.

**Pat Perry** - 01305 750951 or 0330 0162953

## Parish Hall & Activities

*With enquires about **hiring the Parish Hall, joining the Munch Club or the Choir**, please, contact the Parish Office.*

A priest is always available for Confession, spiritual direction, or for a simple chat half an hour before every Service, or at any other time by appointment! For service times and other information about our churches and services (including weddings and funerals), please visit our website:

[www.stpaulsweymouth.org](http://www.stpaulsweymouth.org)