

From the Rectory

Dear friends,

Last year, Easter was a very strange affair as we had to close the Church and everything was done on YouTube. This year will be better as we can at least use the Church for our Holy Week and Easter celebrations. They will be in a modified form and the Services will be shortened to avoid long contact with each other – but it's good to know we can be together again for this important time.

I have always loved the Easter season (I would say that, wouldn't I!) because it challenges the way we look at our world. It reminds us whatever happens in the world or to us, there is always hope that things will improve. When Mary Magdalen visited the tomb of Jesus on that first Easter morning, she met him in the grounds around the burial site. She'd gone to wash and anoint the body as these things hadn't been done on the Friday as it was too late as the Sabbath was fast approaching. Her first opportunity was to go on the Sunday and we read, "Early in the morning, while it was yet dark..." She couldn't have got there any earlier! Yet those words lifted from scripture say so much more as it tells us clearly that the world was still in 'darkness' and waiting to receive the light; not the light of the sun but the light of THE SON. (of God!) Mary was trapped in the ways of the world and when a stranger approached her, the scriptures tell us "supposing him to be the gardener..." That's what her experience of the world had taught her. Who else would be in the grounds at that time on a Sunday morning? Mary had a brief conversation with the stranger who then called her by name. Did he say 'Mary' or was it something more personal... a nick-name or a pet name? I like to think the latter because it was only then that she realised that this stranger was no gardener, but Jesus himself! In one brief moment, the old order of understanding had slipped away and a new revelation was breaking into Mary's life. She was no longer 'in the dark' thinking that she was talking to the gardener, but rather basking in the light of the knowledge that Jesus has risen from the constraints of death.

The anger, anxiety and fear that the followers of Jesus were experiencing was suddenly 'kicked into touch' and replaced by joy, excitement and hope. This was just the beginning of an adventure which we still share today. Some doubted... Thomas, for example. There will always be doubters, cynics and peddlers of doom in our world but we are all called to lift our heads high above their erroneous prophecies and celebrate the love of God and the power of God at work in the world. It is God who gives us hope and the certainty that things can and will change.

These difficult days will end and we will be able to share life with one another again and enjoy the 'fullness of life' which enriches us all. Don't take the Easter story as one locked in the dusty pages of scripture but rather celebrate it and live it to the full each and every day. Resurrection is a reality.... You'd better get used to it!

Fr Keith

