

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 18 April 2021

Third Sunday of Easter

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

*If we can support you in any way at the present time, or you would just like to chat, do please get in touch: 023 8055 4231
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Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us. This Sunday is the third Sunday of Easter, and I will be exploring faith and perspective.

Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

And also with you.

The Lord be with you,

And also with you

Prayer of Thanks

We are going to reflect later on faith, I invite you now to reflect on someone who has had

faith in you and to give thanks for that person. Give thanks too for all you have to be thankful for today.

Prayer of Confession.

Take a moment to own the things we have done that we wish we have not, said that we regret and thought that we should not have thought.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness
and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen
life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father.

Hymn: Crown him with many crowns

1 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

3 Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified;
no angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends their burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

4 Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

Matthew Bridges (1851)

Readings

Acts 3: 12-9

Peter has just healed a lame man, and explains that it was the power of Jesus who has been raised from the dead which enabled this.

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, 'You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

'And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

Luke 24: 36b-48

Two disciples have just come back from Emmaus on the evening of Easter Day. As they are describing how they have met Jesus, he appears to them all again.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

A Reflection by Peter Dockree

I sometimes look back on chapters of my life or even just one of events and cringe. I look at the things I said, at the people I unwittingly offended, at the times I made a fool of myself, and the naivety of some of what I thought, and if I think about it too long (and I try not to) I cringe. Most of those things are small and inconsequential in the bigger picture, but a few things can lead to mulling over the what if of them in a way that simply isn't helpful. Hindsight as they say is a fine thing. So often the value and worth of something or the efficacy of a decision, are judged by what came next. We can't look back on our lives at something we said and did with totally impartiality because we are not the person we were when we said it and did it.

Off course all of our reading of scripture is done from a position of hindsight, even those who recorded it too, and I believe there is true value in trying as very best we can to imagine what these events would have been like without that hindsight. on one level those who lived and breathed those post Easter days had an advantage none of us can ever have, they were there, they were actually a part of the story, but they also had a huge disadvantage they didn't know the bigger picture. Of course things Jesus had said hinted at something bigger, but they hadn't made sense to them, they couldn't make sense to them. Paul recognises this in the first reading when

he notes that those who condemned Jesus acted in ignorance, resonances of course of Jesus's own words father forgive them for the know not what they do". In our second reading too it says they were startled and terrified. That wasn't I imagine some momentary fright when someone steps out from behind a door that you don't expect, this was deep seated utter terror. In Nick Kings translation he also uses the word panic stricken.

I have a very bad habit when I am reading of being tempted to read the last page of the book before I get there. I get too gripped by the tension that I just need to know something about what happens next, but life is not like that. In life just as in the lives those who followed Jesus in those early days, the future was not known. Yes there were prophecies, but they only truly made sense later. The people that we are reading about were still in the story and they didn't know how it would end.

We don't know how any of our stories will end, we can't foresee next week let alone next year. We saw an amusing take on 2020 on the television the other week called *Pandemonium* and they had the (perhaps obvious) cameos of one of the characters at the start of the year booking the holiday of a lifetime and not bothering to pay the extra cancelation fee, you can guess the rest of that bit, and then a few weeks later as the first talk of covid 19 was in

the news the father said "Don't worry about that, believe me if you have been around for as long as I have you would know that these things never come to anything". I am sure I heard and said similar a year and a bit ago, because we simply didn't and couldn't know the next chapter and that was probably a good thing.

When the disciples stood there transfixed by fear and terror, Jesus simply nudges them towards faith in the moment in front of them. It records that in their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering. They didn't have all the answers, they still questioned so much. Faith is not and never will be having all the answers. Sometimes faith leads us to places where there are many more questions. Sometimes it leads us to the dichotomy of joy, disbelief and wondering bundled up in one package. Faith is not always jumping out of the boat certain that we will float and all will be well, faith is stepping out of boat anyway even when we are far from certain and cannot know that all will be well, but faith is believing in the faithfulness of a God who is bigger than all of our stories. Faith is not having all the answers, but it is believing that we are not in the words of a U2 song "stuck in a moment that we can't get out of". Over lent we had some postcards delivered from a thinker called Simon Cross. On one side was a narrative and on the other a few words on each card. They came in this order, and read as follows – It's worth hoping is a lie, it's pointless, I tell you,

don't fall for it". Initially a rather dispiriting and hopeless message, but when you have the whole thing and you read it backwards it says something very different. So I end with this "Don't fall for it, I tell you, it's pointless is a lie, it's worth hoping". That is the invitation of faith in a God much bigger than us.

Prayers

Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us. You may wish to light some candles as you pray.

We especially pray for the Royal Family this week, following the death of HRH Prince Philip last week, with this prayer from the Church of England:

*God of our lives,
we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip,
for his love of our country,
and for his devotion to duty.
We entrust him now to your love and mercy,
through our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen.*

We pray for those known to us and those not known to us who are "stuck in a moment that they can't get out of". May they know the hope, may they find joy and may they be surrounded by love.

For our world and all the challenges we face as a global community. Challenges to tackle the

climate crisis and to show true resolve to do so. Challenges to see justice and fairness. Challenges to hold onto hope and keep the faith. Lord God we have not always treated your world and its people as we should but we pray that you may use us to make the world a better place.

We pray for the sick the grieving and the hurting at this time, and we name people in our hearts now.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

Hymn: Will you come and follow me.

- 1 Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?
- 2 Will you leave yourself behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

- 3 Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean
in you and you in me?
- 4 Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?
- 5 Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

J Bell & G Maule © 1987, WGRG Iona Community.

Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for worshiping with us today.

As we take up our cross and follow, may we experience love, embrace challenge, and hold onto hope.

May the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen

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Annual Church Meetings

You are invited to join us for the Annual Church Meetings (APCM and APM) of Swaythling Parish, to be held on Sunday 25 April 2021 at 11am at St Alban's Church, as part of the morning worship service.