



DURHAM CATHEDRAL

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

Praying Together

*during the week beginning Sunday 12 April:
Easter Day*

During this time of great anxiety and uncertainty, we want to stay in touch with our regular worshippers and indeed with everyone who is associated with the Cathedral family.

This is particularly important to us at a time when, following the Church of England's instructions, public worship at the Cathedral has been suspended. The residential clergy are still saying the Daily Offices at home and they are being live-streamed via the cathedral website where there is a link that takes you to the Cathedral's Facebook page (you don't need a Facebook account).

We hope that this pamphlet will provide you with important worship and prayer resources for use at home as well as a reminder of how to keep in touch with us, especially if you have particularly needs. Please be assured that you are firmly in our thoughts and prayers, and please pray for us at this very difficult and worrying time.

Gospel for Easter Day

Matthew 28. 1 - 10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.'

Thought for the Day

by The Reverend Canon Michael Hampel



One of my favourite paintings is 'The Supper at Emmaus' by the seventeenth century Italian artist Caravaggio. It's a large and beautiful canvas and happily hangs not far away in Italy but in London at the National Gallery. The account of Christ's post-resurrection appearance on the way to Emmaus is itself one of the most enigmatic of the stories in the gospels with the strange way in which the two disciples (not two of the twelve but members of the larger group of Jesus's followers) don't seem to recognise their teacher. The sun is in their eyes on the road and perhaps their eyes are filled too with tears as they recall the death of their beloved master. At the same time, some have judged their lack of recognition to arise out of some strange difference in appearance between the Jesus who was crucified and the risen Christ of this story. But stories have more to tell us than at first sight appears. That's the point of a good story. Whether the disciples really couldn't recognise Jesus despite their close proximity as they walked along or whether the risen Christ somehow looked different doesn't matter so much as the point which St Luke in his gospel wants us to understand as a result of the way he tells the story. It's a point

which the artist Caravaggio understands and it's the central theme of his painting. And the crucial point to the story is the moment at which the disciples do indeed recognise the risen Lord. The point comes when he gives thanks for the bread which they are about to eat. The disciples have listened to Christ teaching them as they walked along the way to Emmaus. Then the time comes for them to rest and they stop by an inn. They urge their companion to enter with them and take a meal as their guest. In the old King James version of the Bible, the wording at this point is, 'Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent' – providing the inspiration for the hymn 'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide'. They still don't know in whose presence they are. And then, over the meal, Jesus takes the bread and gives thanks for it. At that point, their eyes are opened and they recognise Christ. In the Caravaggio painting, the artist captures this moment of realisation brilliantly. Despite the shadows which darken the edges of the picture and which emphasise the time of the day and which suggest the inn is gloomy and badly lit, there is nevertheless a brilliant light shining on the scene. The two disciples are staggered by the revelation that has just occurred and one falls back in his chair while the other grabs the edge of the table. The figure of Christ however is calm and serene and he blesses the bread with a gesture that recalls the action of the priest presiding at the Eucharist, offering up the bread in remembrance of Christ. And this, of course, is the point. Our celebration of Easter is recalled every Sunday and not just at Easter. Sunday is the day of resurrection and the Eucharist is the central act of remembrance of Christ's saving passion and of his resurrection. What makes the disciples open their eyes is an act which the twelve disciples experienced only a few days before when Jesus shared bread and wine with them at the Last Supper, in the upper room back in Jerusalem. One gets the sense from St Luke's story that the account of the Last Supper has already been passed on to the larger group of Christ's followers such that this particular act of giving thanks over the bread in an inn on the way to Emmaus is already slightly familiar to the two disciples here. Perhaps they have already celebrated what we now call the Eucharist or Holy Communion in the last few days since the night before the crucifixion. The suggestion is there that, in the Eucharist, we have our own chance to recognise the risen Lord – we who like the two disciples on the way to Emmaus did not share the Last Supper or witness the empty tomb. It's almost as if St Luke deliberately keeps the eyes of these two disciples closed to understanding that Christ is actually present in their midst until they see him in the breaking of the bread because he knows that this is how it will be for his readers across the ensuing centuries. There are two important lessons to be learned from this gospel story: that there is more to a story than at first sight appears and that this story has been written with us in mind so that we can share too in the post-resurrection appearances of Christ rather than merely shout 'Alleluia' across the gulf of time which separates us from that first Easter Day and our own Easter two thousand years later. The enigmatic nature of the story allows us to slot ourselves into it and to behold the risen Lord when we come to receive him—as we will do again in good time—in the broken bread and wine outpoured of the Eucharist.

Prayers and Readings for use in Easter Week

At the Empty Tomb

We recall the discovery of the empty tomb in John's Gospel. The Font is a symbol of Christ's tomb and the place of new birth. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote in the fourth century: 'You made the confession that brings salvation, and submerged yourselves three times in the water and emerged: by this symbolic gesture you were secretly re-enacting the burial of Christ three days in the tomb... In one and the same action you died and were born; the water of salvation became both tomb and mother for you.' We pray for those who will shortly receive the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, and pray that we might all walk in newness of life.

Reading

John 20. 1 - 8

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for in you our God reveals the awesome power of love that is stronger even than death. As in your dying you destroyed death, so in your rising may we be raised above the trials and torments of this world's woe. To you, Lord Jesus, the fullness of your life revealed in an empty tomb, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Road to Emmaus

We commemorate the story of the walk to Emmaus as narrated by Luke. This narrative is often used as a way to perceive spiritual growth within the individual, challenging our

perception of the Risen Christ. Gregory the Great, discuss this story in his Homilies on the Gospels, believes:

They did not, in fact, have faith in him, yet they were talking about him. The Lord therefore appeared to them, but did not show them a face they could recognize. In this way the Lord enacted outwardly, before their physical eyes, what was going on in them inwardly, before the eyes of their hearts. For inwardly they simultaneously loved him and doubted him; therefore the Lord was outwardly present to them, and at the same time did not reveal his identity. Since they were speaking about him, he showed them his presence, but since they doubted him, he hid from them the appearance by which they could have recognized him.

In this time of uncertainty, may we, who experience Jesus in Word and Sacrament be open to experiencing Him in the least expected parts of our lives, echoing the words of the two disciples 'Abide with us'.

Reading

Luke 24. 28 - 35

As the two disciples came near the village to which they were going, Jesus walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Abide with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Prayer

We praise and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for you are with us even when our eyes are closed to your companionship. Walk this day alongside the disconsolate and the despairing, open their eyes to your gentle illumination, and let their hearts burn within them at your invisible presence. To you, Lord Jesus, walking by our side, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Jesus illuminates the Disciples with the Holy Spirit

Illumination has many meanings - it means learning and understanding both spiritually and mentally. It also means the bringing in of light both physically and emotionally. John's narrative of the despondency of the disciples following the Crucifixion, followed by their confusion then joy at seeing the Risen Lord leads to Jesus, through the Holy Spirit illuminating them for the future ministry they were called to undertake. May we continue to pray that the Holy Spirit may illumine us.

Reading

John 20. 19 - 23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Prayer

We praise you and we bless you, our risen Lord Jesus, King of glory, for as you were sent by the Father, so you send us. Illuminate your Church with the gifts to fulfil our calling that we may love as you loved, serve as you served, and willingly follow wherever you lead. To you, Lord Jesus, gifting your people, be honour and glory, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

**The next issue of *Praying Together*
will be published on Monday 20 April**

A Prayer for use during the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who are 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.

A Prayer of St John Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests; Fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

The Paschal Candle

As Christians, our faith is entwined with the metaphor of *light dispelling the darkness*. Nowhere is this more vividly illustrated than by the use of the Paschal Candle. Lit from the kindled fire at the First Eucharist of Easter, its light leads us into church, then proceeds to be used as the kindling light for all candles lit. The term *Paschal* come from the Latin *Pascha*, originally derived from the Hebrew for Passover (*Pesach*), and relates to the mystery of Salvation.

Prior to the Reformation, the *Rites of Durham* described in detail the Paschal candle-stand, which was set up on Maundy Thursday. It stood in the midst of the Quire, with seven branches, decorated with dragons and shields. It was monumental in height - the *Rites* suggesting it reached up to the vaulted ceiling!

The modern stand is shorter, as is the candle itself. The candle is often decorated with the following:

- The cross is always the central symbol
- The Greek letters 'A' (alpha) and 'O' (omega) signify that God is the beginning and the end (from the Book of Revelation)
- The current year represents God in the present amidst the people
- Five grains of incense are embedded in the candle to represent the five wounds of Jesus: the three nails that pierced his hands and feet, the spear thrust into his side, and the thorns that crowned his head.

In this time of darkness and uncertainty, we pray that the light of Christ rising in glory will banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

*Christ yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,
Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever.
Amen.*

Contact details for The Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

Address: 15 The College, Durham, DH1 3EQ
Email: michael.everitt@durhamcathedral.co.uk
Telephone: 0191 384 0164