

Reflection for Easter Sunday

Sunday, 12th April 2020

If you do not have a copy of the missalette, you can find today's readings at www.universalis.com

Today is Easter Sunday. We have arrived at this principle feast of the Christian faith. But what a journey it has been this year. When we received ashes just over 6 weeks ago, I'm sure none of us would have imagined how the past few weeks would unfold. I know many of you have tried very hard to enter into the spirit of Holy Week through your own prayer and meditation. Those who have accompanied the Lord in his suffering can now share with him the glory of his victory.

How does our belief in the Risen Lord give us an insight into the times we are living through. I'm pretty sure that by now every single person in this country knows someone personally who has been infected with Covid-19. Some have recovered or are on the way to recovery. Each has a painful, and sometimes fearful, story to tell. Sadly, many of us will know of someone who has not recovered. As the death toll mounts, so the number of families burdened with grief multiplies.

Many of us will know of someone fighting on the front line trying to save lives: doctors, nurses, carers and other support staff. I'm sure like me you are impressed with their dedication and heroism – putting themselves and their families at risk to save others. In this way they become “other Christs”.

Most people have heeded government advise and self-isolated, stopping the deadly spread of the virus in its tracks. This too takes its toll on us – coping with isolation and not being able to go out as we would like. Sadly too we see in the media those who selfishly disregard the instructions about social distancing. It seems a crisis like this brings out both the best and the worst in people. Yet the resurrection of Jesus can and does shed light on all of these experiences.

For the woman who accompanied Jesus and his disciples, it must have seemed like the end of the world as they knew it when the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb. The stone was rolled, the guards were placed, a wonderful journey with this man Jesus had come to an end. Mary finds the tomb empty – the stone rolled away, the guards gone and body of Jesus is not there where it is supposed to be. She finds Peter and John and slowly the realisation of what has happened begins to dawn on his friends.

John runs faster than Peter, but waits till Peter comes before entering the tomb. Both see the same scene: the cloths neatly rolled up but the body gone. But it is John who realises the significance of what he sees. The man Jesus, who was brutally executed and buried is now alive. He has risen from the dead. Their dark thoughts are dispelled. Hope for the future dawns.

This Easter we are not allowed to gather as a believing community to celebrate these salvific events. But individually, we can live them. We are an Easter people. What has happened to our Lord and saviour can and does happen to us as well. This crisis will be over. Our freedoms will be restored. We will be able to celebrate Mass again. There is light at the end of the tunnel. However, because of what we have lived through, life in the future will be different.

Because Jesus has risen from the dead we look to the future with new eyes. We can learn to trust. God leading us through some dark times will show us a future where there is hope. Instead of division, each one of us defending our own corner, we can be united in a common purpose. We have learnt to look out for each other, and we have enjoyed that sense of “all being in this together”. Many of us have had more time for prayer and reflection. We feel spiritually stronger.

Let's allow the grace of this Easter season to renew us to be ready to face the future and the challenges it holds. We are the Easter people and we are ready for God to surprise us again.

During the week to come we let the light of the Risen Lord Jesus to enter into every part of our lives. The readings and a mini reflection by Fr Tim will be posted each day on the parish website and in the resources box by the Cenotaph. Happy Easter everyone.