

Parish Church of All Saints Boyne Hill Maidenhead

Holy Week 2020

In this booklet we have set the main elements of Holy Week worship for you to use at home. Easter Day sermon and resources will be published around 9th April.

Palm Sunday is the start of the most important week in the Christian Calendar - **Holy Week**. This concludes our study of *Walking the Way of the Cross* by Stephen Cottrell, Paula Gooder and Philip North (Church House Publishing 2019).

We invite you to follow Jesus on the Way of the Cross, from his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, through the Last Supper, his Trial, Crucifixion, and Death, on to his glorious Resurrection. Seven days from Hosanna!, through Crucify! and on to victory Alleluia!

Since the Gospels give differing accounts of what happened during this momentous week, we cannot say with accuracy what took place when and where.

Holy Week is not an historical pageant but a living liturgy, when hopefully we experience something new each time we make the spiritual journey. This year we are using the book, *'I Thirst'* by Stephen Cottrell (first published by Zondervan in 2003, new edition published by Hodder & Stoughton in 2019)

Do have a blessed Holy Week wherever you are.

Introduction by Fr Jeremy

If you are feeling anything like me this year as we move towards participation in the great week in the Christian year you will be filled with sadness. Those feelings are of regret that we cannot, as a community, physically come together to journey from Palm Sunday and the procession with our Palms walking from the Parish Centre to the church. We will not experience the sharing of our Lord's Last Supper or indeed participate in the foot washing. Maundy Thursday evening we are denied keeping watch together and as we move to Good Friday, we cannot, within the church, mark the sacrifice of love that Jesus made for us. We can hear in our minds the readings of the vigil on Holy Saturday of creation, and of a new spirit filling our lives. We can visualise the Easter Candle being held high as we enter the darkened building of All Saints singing 'The Light of Christ, thanks be to God' but we cannot experience it physically.

On Easter morning we can visualise All Saints Church looking glorious with the Easter Lilies and the children around the Easter Garden sharing the joy of the resurrection. We can sing in our hearts the great Easter hymns like 'Jesus Christ is Risen today' and 'Thine be the Glory' but we cannot sing them together in community.

What we can do though is share the Holy Week journey within our homes. Follow the services from the web-site whether from the Church of England or the Diocese of Oxford. Read the sermons for each day prepared by Jeanette, Jo and myself and use the following symbols to meditate on.

Symbols to help us focus on the liturgy of Holy Week

Palm Sunday – A Palm Cross, or an image of a crown, or of a donkey. What sort of Saviour do these images highlight?

Maundy Thursday – Use a towel and soap and water to wash. We need to be keeping clean anyway, but we are following Christ's example of service in this action. Share some bread and wine reminding you of the Last Supper.

Good Friday – Focus simply on an image of a cross and reflect on God's love for us. If you haven't got a cross get a hot cross bun. Even if you have got a cross get a hot cross bun as well! Perhaps play some music that is helpful (See Andrew Stafford's choice at the end of each day)

Easter Vigil – Focus on a candle – perhaps a Baptismal candle or a picture of an Easter candle or any candle. Reflect upon the light overcoming darkness and goodness overcoming evil.

Easter Morning – Focus on New Life – maybe something you can see in your garden or on things you can see outside. Think of the Easter Resurrection joy, eat some chocolate and drink a glass of fizz or your favourite drink. My Easter sermon will be published in Parish News next week.

*With prayers and every blessing for a joyful
Eastertide*

Fr Jeremy,

Jeanette Lock,

Joanne Sheppard

Palm Sunday 5th April

Hymn choice today – All glory, laud and honour

A Reflection by Fr Jeremy: Palm Sunday – The beginning of the journey of Holy Week that will give hope in a darkened world.

Fourth station of the cross—Peter denies Jesus

Text Philippians 2:5-11 and Matthew 2:1-11

Towards the beginning of Lent Matthew Firth shared with us what would prove to be our one and only evening of the Lent Art course together. So much has happened since with the pandemic called COVID 19 that this delightful evening, spent with half a dozen other folk from All Saints, feels to me an age ago.

One of the two paintings Matthew shared with us was '*The Agony in the Garden*' by Giovanni Bellini (c.1430-1516). The painting shows Jesus kneeling in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, looking forward towards an angel who is holding a chalice and paten. The painting depicts too, the three disciples, Peter, James and John fast asleep while Jesus is in prayer. In the background is the cross.

Matthew invited comments from the group. Julia Wakeling asked, 'Is the rather feeble fence that circles the Praying Christ, the crown of thorns?' We do not have a definitive answer to the question but, Julia, your response will do for me.

You see today we are asked to look at what type of Saviour was Christ? On Palm Sunday the people see the Messiah who has come. They wanted (the disciples certainly wanted – who had argued who was the greatest in Mark 9: 30-37) a conquering monarch, a military leader, not a peacemaker riding on a donkey. By the choice of the donkey, Jesus is not associating himself with kings and generals riding horses and chariots. This is the Saviour whom as St Paul tells us 'emptied himself...humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death on a cross.'

Using our Lent book, '*Walking The Way Of The Cross*' by Stephen Cottrell, Paula Gooder and Philip North, on station one in the Garden of Gethsemane, Cottrell says, '*I was used to Jesus when he was strong,*

turning over tables, casting out demons, clever with speech... 'I want his stories to be true, of hope and forgiveness and of a God that loves me.' So do I, Bishop Stephen, so do the people of All Saints and the whole of Christendom. You speak for us all. Stephen continues *'It isn't easy for Jesus to be weak and scared and lacking sleep'* as Bellini and the gospel depict and describe him.

Moving to Station 4 of the above- mentioned book we find Peter denying Jesus. Cottrell uses the text *'I do not know this man'*. Peter got this right for once; he didn't know him. Of course, none of us really want to know him this way. We thought he would be our all-powerful Superman. After all he said he would tear down the temple and rebuild in three days. Now on seeing the Jesus as the humble suffering servant we feel stupid, vulnerable, desolate. We feel alongside the World at this point in history, facing this cruel virus very scared. Back to Cottrell, *'I keep thinking, that something else will make sense out of this senselessness.'*

How many people in our world today are feeling vulnerable? The nurses and doctors and carers of the NHS, people working long hours at the superstores, people ill in hospital or at home, those people worried about elderly loved ones isolated, those worried about their livelihoods. Let's be honest, most of us are now in a similar position to Peter. Humanity is vulnerable.

This is Palm Sunday. We move together (probably isolated at home but together in spirit) to experience Jesus sharing the Last Supper, the meal that points to the gift of New Life of Heavenly food. We see Jesus washing feet and challenging us to join him as servant people. We see the cross and believe that Jesus' sacrifice will lead to the act that *'something else will make sense out of senselessness'*. Yes, Jesus' sacrifice will lead to new and transformed life. On Holy Saturday we remember the prophets pointing to the Saviour to come, the one who will breathe new life into his people. We will visualise the Easter Fire and live spirit filled lives overcoming our fears to take on the challenge to love God and our neighbours. We will visualise the Paschal Candle alight from the fire entering the darkened church of All Saints. We will sing in our hearts 'The Light of Christ, thanks be to God'.

We will know that this light overcomes darkness and fears, that this light of goodness and mercy overcomes evil and this light of New Life overcomes death.

Monday in Holy Week 6th April

This may have been the day that Jesus "cleansed the Temple", and the evening that he was anointed with precious ointment by a woman thought by some to be Mary Magdalene.

An Address by Jeanette Lock

CHAPTER 1-*The God who Shares*

Holy Week is my favourite time within the Church Year. I love the slow build up we get throughout the week: the quiet prayerfulness of The Watch on Maundy Thursday, the Walk of Witness with other Christians in the town on Good Friday, the wonderful Easter Vigil on Easter Saturday, and the joyfulness of the Resurrection Hope on Easter Sunday. This year, all of that will be very different. Suddenly, our whole world is very different. And yet, there are still opportunities to follow the Holy Week and Easter journey in different, yet still deeply spiritual, ways.

This talk was originally planned to be delivered at the Monday evening Eucharist service. It focuses on the first chapter from '*I Thirst*' by Stephen Cottrell, our chosen book for our Holy Week talks. This chapter is entitled '*The God who Shares*'.

In his introduction, Stephen Cottrell wonders how the two words, '*I Thirst*' could be stretched into a book but goes on to say that "*these words from the cross can be a window into God's purposes*". In this talk, I hope to unpack that a bit more, looking in particular at how Jesus, by thirsting on the cross, is sharing our suffering, sharing our humanity.

In Jesus the frailty of human flesh and the eternity of God are joined together. The one who died on the cross, crying out in thirst, is the one who was born into a manger, sharing human life. Stephen Cottrell says that "*because Jesus shared our humanity, we can share his divinity*". Both in his birth in a simple stable and now in his passion and death, Jesus is sharing our humanity; sharing it to offer love and to communicate love in a loving way. But Jesus doesn't just show us love; he is love. The self-emptying of his power to become a human being is a demonstration of his love. It's what we mean when we say we are made in the image of God; we are made by the one who is love.

Perhaps for some people Jesus' humanity can be difficult to understand. His divinity is much easier; his power to heal, to change people. But Jesus understands us because he lived a human life. He was born, entering the world just like any other vulnerable baby, depending on his parents and family for his basic needs. Jesus had a body. That body got tired; just like we do. He felt pain; just like we do. He felt hunger and thirst; just like we do. He felt isolated and alone; just like many of us are now feeling with social isolation and social distancing. The fact that Jesus of Nazareth was truly and fully human was plain to those who saw, and heard, and touched and shared his life. Jesus clearly displayed human emotions. When his friend Lazarus died, we hear how he wept (John 11: 35). He understands and shares our suffering. He understands our worries, concerns and fears that we have now surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. The God who shares is the God who cares.

Yet sharing is done best when it's a two-way thing. When I am having lunch with my grandson Daniel, we often share each other's food. Somehow Granny's orange is much tastier than his!

So perhaps we also need to try and share something about Jesus' pain. As an example, we can look to the Jesuits where, in the third week of their Spiritual Exercises, they suggest we focus on connecting to the Calvary by praying the narrative of Jesus's last days on earth, and discover our own connectedness to the events of those days. Questions such as "Where is God in our experience of suffering and dying?" can emerge. To which perhaps we can hear God saying to us, "Where are you in mine?"

Because if we truly love Jesus and want to follow him, that means being with him in his suffering, reflecting not just on his physical pain but also the emotional pain of a man who was misunderstood, rejected and alone. To me this sounds like it could be a hard and challenging thing to do, imagining Jesus' anguish and pain at the cross and his humanness in the Garden of Gethsemane makes me feel somewhat uncomfortable.

Because by looking at the passion of Christ in the cross, surely, I am also looking at the heart of God in pain. But the Jesuits believe that by keeping our eyes clearly fixed on Jesus in this way, we become more like the one we walk with to Calvary: more loving, more faithful, more generous and more compassionate.

Stephen Cottrell says, "*The God revealed to us in Jesus is the one who climbs into our lap and cries with us. He shares both the joys of our life and the most heart-breaking sorrows*". He is alongside us, holding our hand when we feel lonely and isolated, when we are fearful and anxious, he is leading the way, sometimes being the only glimmer of light when

everything else is lost, when everything else has been stripped away. We need to remember and have engraved on our hearts the knowledge that this is a God who knows us closely, intimately, knows our worries and fears even before they are formed on our lips. It makes such a difference to know that the person to whom we pray, the man we hope to follow, the one who is risen from the dead, understands us, because he lived a human life and one that, particularly in his final week, was filled with suffering. At this time of crisis, worry and uncertainty, we can be assured that God the Son has made a way to come and walk with us and that he will always be there, sharing our humanity, sharing our suffering. Amen.

Suggested Music:

William Walton: *Drop, drop, slow tears*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw_ccYmnl3Q

Tuesday in Holy Week 7th April

From an early date pilgrims in Jerusalem followed the last journey of Christ from Pilate's house to Calvary and the tomb. This devotion takes place during Lent and Passiontide in many churches, moving to each of the fourteen stations in turn, singing hymns and meditating on what each station portrays.

An Address by Jo Sheppard

Chapter 2 *The Word that shapes*

Through the love of God and our salvation in Jesus Christ may our hearts be opened, and the Spirit guide us, so we can receive God's word today. Amen.

As we approach the accelerating events towards the Crucifixion and beyond to the glory of Christ's resurrection and our salvation, in Stephen Cottrell's book, *I Thirst*, we are focusing on the chapter *The Word that Shapes*. How Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection fulfilled the scriptures of the Old Testament and how we can live the word of the New Testament.

I must admit I was a bit stumped by how I could formulate a talk when I first read it. There is so much there, and it was not like discerning scripture. But I read and reread and prayed and prayed and as I did this, I

thought how well do I really know Jesus, and is this the question God is directing me to ask?’

Through scripture the first Christians came to understand this different Messiah. A suffering servant, filled with love and peace for everyone, rather than the military leader they were expecting to overthrow their transgressors and lead the nation of Israel.

There are many examples in the New Testament where you hear the Apostles quoting the Old Testament to explain Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection. Such as Acts 8: 32-33 that quotes Isaiah 53:7-8. *‘He was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement, he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.’* They, the Apostles, have seen the face of God and are trying to teach new and existing disciples how they too can see the face of the risen Christ. How they can understand him and know who he truly is, even though they, and we, can no longer physically see him we can still know Jesus and build a relationship with him.

How well do I know Jesus? I can only know him by recognising who he truly is. Because sometimes, and I think most of us are guilty of this, do we really see him, or do we build an image of Jesus that is how we want him to be, so he fits snugly into our lives, rather than us into his? By seeing the Word Jesus, the word made flesh, for who he really is, we can open our hearts and arms to truly live how God wants us to. We can become living Easter people.

Sometimes I feel like the disciples on that road to Emmaus. It is thought they were scared and running away from the horror of the crucifixion, Sanhedrin and Rome. Obviously, I am not running from that terror, but we all have busy times, happy events, sad events and stressful events that can take us down a different road. A road away from where Jesus wants us to be.

Jesus was not the Messiah the Emmaus disciples were expecting, and the crucifixion may have been proof to them that he was not who they thought he was. And they were right, he was not who they thought he was. They had heard rumours about the women seeing Jesus after his death but still they left Jerusalem. Still not knowing him.

Can we be like that sometimes? Reading scripture, praying and receiving communion, with all the evidence before us, and still not know him fully. On the Emmaus road Jesus came alongside the disciples and told them

what the scriptures meant; he did not change them but reinterpreted them, but they still did not recognise him. Only at dinner, when Jesus broke bread and blessed it, did they realise who he was.

What a revelation! Such a revelation they turned around and went back to Jerusalem.

We are the same. Jesus is always walking alongside us and when we go wrong, he is there to turn us around and get us back on to the right road. But we must be open to accept Jesus for the loving God he is and accept him in his image and not one of our own making. To be willing to change and want to turn around.

When we break bread with Jesus at his table in the Eucharist, he invites us in to know him, to go out into the world and be like him. John the Baptist tells us Jesus *'is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'*. Stephen Cottrell explains *'the lamb of God is a concept that runs throughout the Old Testament'* and he points us to the Exodus and the Passover, where Jews painted blood of slaughtered lambs on their doorposts so the Lord would pass over the house to save their first born. Stephen Cottrell says:

'Jesus represents the Passover lambs and to be the lamb of God is therefore to be the one who brings liberation' and he adds *'the whole story of the Gospel is understood, proclaimed and recorded with constant reference to the unfolding drama of God's involvement with his people in the Old Testament. The death of Jesus, and the meal of the Eucharist that represents and celebrates that death, are the new Passover and the new exodus, Jesus himself is the Lamb of God.... Christ, was in the end, the promise of God's own passionate involvement with the world he made'*.

With this reflection it reinforces for me that the Lord is our salvation, he suffered to save us from ourselves, our sins and told us to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves. To know Jesus is to know love.

I would like to end with a short prayer from Stephen Cotterell's book by Dick Williams.

As the days lengthen and the earth spends longer in the light of day, grant that I may spend longer in the light of your presence, O Lord, and those seeds of your Word, which have been long buried within me, grow, like everything around us, into love for you and love for your people: to become a visible declaration of your lordship in my life. Grant, Father, that this Holy Week there may be a springtime for my life in Christ. Amen.

Suggested Music:

Pergolesi: *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83kndEsHqMc>

Wednesday in Holy Week 8th April

A day in which Jesus may have rested, knowing the ordeal he was about to go through and how it would end. His followers were at this stage fairly confident that he was about to bring in the Kingdom. A day for prayer and reflection.

An Address by Jeanette Lock

Chapter 3 *The Call to be Thirsty*

This talk was originally planned to be delivered at the Wednesday morning and evening Eucharist services during Holy Week. It focuses on the third chapter from *I Thirst* by Stephen Cottrell, our chosen book for our Holy Week talks. This chapter is entitled *The Call to be Thirsty*.

But I want to start by sharing Psalm 57: 1-4

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge;

in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfils his purpose for me.

He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame those who trample on me. God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness.

We are living in difficult times. Certainly, I have never experienced anything as frightening as we now have with the coronavirus crisis. Some of you will have memories of the 2nd World War and the horrors that brought. But for most of us, not being able to go where we want, to do what we want, to be with who we want—that's all unfamiliar territory. It's as

if everything that we cherish has been stripped away. And then; what's left?

Well, let's think about that. Let's think about it in the context of the theme for today's talk, *The Call to be Thirsty*.

Here we have Jesus on the Cross. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he'd looked for the support from his friends, but they had either disowned him, denied him, or fallen asleep. Then, the soldiers had fought over his clothing, tearing it off him and trying to divide it up amongst themselves. His disciples have abandoned him, running off, terrified they may be implicated by knowing this man. He was alone with his destiny. He is faintly aware of his mother and his best friend somewhere around, perhaps at the foot of his cross. It seems as if everything he cherished had been stripped away. And then; what was left?

When everything seems to have been stripped away both for Jesus, and for us, it is to God that we look to for strength and affirmation. *Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge (Psalm 57)*.

Stephen Cottrell comments that '*it is this heartfelt awareness of God as Father, and the deep-seated conviction and knowledge that God loves him, that gives Jesus courage and comfort, enabling him to continue when other voices suggest other ways.*'

The literal meaning of the word 'comfort' is 'to give strength' and in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus receives comfort and strength to face what lies ahead. While the comfort Jesus receives from God will not make the pain any less real, nor 'take this cup away from me', but it does give Jesus strength and resolve in the knowledge that he's not in it alone. And neither are we.

When everything else has been stripped away, it is like the distractions of life have moved away, leaving just us alone with God. Because if we are saying that God is always with us, always present, then how wonderful to be able to spend some time alone with God. Having people, places, material possessions in our lives can become disordered attachments when they push God out of the centre of our lives and become key to our identity. The core of who we are, the personal vocation that each of us is blessed with, is often hidden from us by the exterior person we inevitably craft ourselves to be. The Community of Sisters at Burnham Abbey are a wonderful example of how the stripping away of those disordered attachments can enhance every aspect of Spiritual Life and deepen our

relationship with God.

So perhaps now, in this time of enforced social isolation and a lockdown on our movements, we can find the space to be with the God who loves us and wants to give comfort to our troubled hearts and minds. According to St Augustine, *'God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves'*. Even though the surface of our lives may be deeply disturbed, there is always a place deeper within where is calm.

One of my favourite books is called *"Finding your Hidden Treasure"* by Ben O'Rourke, an Augustinian friar. In it he says:

"To reach the place where Christ awaits us we need to be prepared for long periods of silence and quiet, long enough for our doubts to dissolve, our cares to lose their urgent pressures, our uncertainty to give way to trust. To wait in silence for as long as it takes is to be taken eventually to the still centre where we find that the mind has become quiet and the heart is at peace. And, in the stillness, we find God".

Jesus is on the cross. He is the one who thirsts. Everything has been stripped away, but he falls back on the loving relationship of his heavenly Father.

What do we fall back on when things are stripped away? When we are feeling vulnerable, alone, perhaps unsure of what the future holds? We too can fall back on the loving relationship with our heavenly Father and be with the God who alone can meet our deepest needs.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge;

in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, until the destroying storms pass by.

I cry to God Most High, to God who fulfils his purpose for me.

He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame those who trample on me. God will send forth his steadfast love and his faithfulness.

Suggested Music:

G F Handel: *Behold the Lamb of God*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keX7IG6VsiY>

THE EASTER TRIDUUM

Maundy Thursday 9th April

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter belong together, try and take part in each of the three main services starting with the Eucharist of the Lord's Supper, tonight, and concluding with an Easter Eucharist.

Hymn Choice *Ubi Caritas*

An Address by Jo Sheppard

Chapter 4 *The Tenacity of Love*

The Last Supper was the occasion of the institution of the Eucharist. It is almost certain that Jesus was celebrating Passover with his apostles. At the close of the meal he took bread and wine which he blessed and then gave it to them saying, "*This is my body which is given for you.*" then he took the cup saying, "*This is my blood of the New Covenant shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of me*". Most Christians have continued to carry out this command in a variety of settings and with differing interpretations, as the central act of worship.

It was at the start of the Supper that Jesus took the servant rôle and washed the feet of the disciples and gave a new commandment. That we should love one another, as he loves us. Why not come forward at the Foot-washing, an act of humility. This is a liturgical act and so only one foot is washed.

The Eucharist begins in joyful mood, the bell is rung at the Gloria and then remains silent until Easter Day. The Eucharistic Prayer and the rest of the service is said simply. At the close the remaining consecrated elements are taken in solemn procession to the Altar of Repose for the Gethsemane Watch which lasts until Midnight. Through the love of God and our salvation in Jesus Christ may our hearts be opened, and the Spirit guide us, so we receive God's word today. Amen.

Jesus showed a humbling love at the last supper when he washed the disciples' feet. It was not out of duty but a love of humanity, and he wanted the disciples to do the same. Be servants and love one another. And he instructs us to do the same.

Something that I often miss when reading John 13 is that Jesus also washed Judas' feet, knowing full well that he was going to betray him. I'm not sure I would have had such humility! But this demonstrates for me beyond any doubt that God loves us all, sinners and betrayers alike. Surely then I too should be more forgiving and more loving. Not doubt him or complain when he asks me to be a servant. It parallels his commandment 'just as I have loved you, you also should love one another'.

Tom Wright in his book *John for Everyone* tells us that Jesus is giving us a pattern to follow. He says,

'The word Jesus uses could mean, in the ancient world, a picture showing how something was to be done, a tracing that someone else should follow, filling in the details. And this pattern sets Jesus' followers a task so laborious, requiring such a strain not only on the eyes but also on the nerves, will, heart and energy, that we shouldn't be surprised at how many of us fail to get it right. Jesus, having washed his disciples' feet, declares that he has established a pattern for them to follow'.

Washing feet is something a slave would do and in our modern world we can relate to the tasks, some of which are messy or menial, that need to be done.

Are we doing things out of duty or are we doing them out of love?

I have to admit sometimes I do things out of duty and forget I should be doing things out of love. Who can say they don't? But when I get to church and feel God's presence and the love in our community, I remember why I'm here. Bringing this love into daily life, at work and at home, is even harder. But I need to remember being a Christian is not a part time job. It is for life, and, a phrase I hate, but it makes a point, being a Christian is 24-7!

Of course, the Priesthood are the Lord's dedicated servants, however, we serve too when we are active participants in church. We are God's servants when we clean the church, provide refreshments, are a sides person, in the outside world as Street Angels or doing Open the Book. The list is endless. For me most notably when we are an altar server and more so a Sub-deacon, when we are (or should be) humbled and

honoured at serving and are absolute servants of God, the Priest and the congregation. We used to say nobody notices you as a server and that is the way it should. Many altar servers have had people say to them 'I did not see you in church today' but we had been on the serving team. Mind you; people notice when we make mistakes!

In our busy lives and our society of 'oneness' it is hard to find time to be a servant but maybe I, we, use that as an excuse. God helps us with his love and our love for him makes us want to serve him more.

Sometimes our simple acts of love are what we need to do to serve God. Not get angry at someone who has annoyed you, picking up someone's walking stick when it falls over, caring for your children or elderly relatives, getting our sacristan a cup of tea at the end of a service, visiting the needy, not always putting ourselves first and thinking of others, donating to the church or a charity, again the list is endless and I am sure we could add many examples to it. To follow Jesus' instruction 'I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you' is a core teaching. We should remember God and his plan is bigger than ourselves and we should find this humbling and not expect anything in return.

Tom Wright says:

'Those who go in Jesus' name, who get on with whatever work he gives them to do in his spirit and his love, are given an extraordinary status and privilege. Anyone who welcomes hem, welcomes Jesus, and thereby also welcomes the one who sent him'.

Using the gifts God has given us we all serve God and each other in our own unique ways. By serving we should do this from the heart and from joy so we serve like Jesus at the last supper, washing the disciples' feet, we should do it from a deep love of God and of each other.

I would like to end with a couple of things for us to reflect on and some words from Stephen Cottrell's book *I Thirst*.

How has God's love changed us and what we do?

How has it affected our relationships with others?

Finally, Stephen Cottrell says:

'There will be a judgement, a final reckoning where we are brought face to face with God. On that day we will see ourselves as we really are, in need of God's mercy. And we will see God as God truly is: we will look upon the face of love, and know God as the ultimate source of goodness and mercy. But on this side of heaven, we don't need to be afraid because the

one who judges us is Jesus. And this judgement is the outpouring of reconciling love. Are we going to acknowledge our need and accept it is the only question that matters?

To accept God's love, however tentatively, indeed even to live in that love without ever knowing it, is to begin that process of being embraced by the cross of Christ, to begin to be transformed by his thirsting, searching love, to be made ready for heaven.' Amen.

Suggested Music:

Durufle *Ubi Caritas : Where love is there God is.*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rj5BH-UmDV0>

Tallis *If ye love me, keep my commandments:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqt005j1dB0>

Wm Byrd: Ave verum corpus:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z2ckGcpx6xl>

Psalm 22: My God, My God, Look upon me: (during stripping of altars)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEPaasU94-A>

Now my tongue, the mystery telling:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zf93uqEqYIQ&list=RDzf93uqEqYIQ&start_radio=1&t=0&t=0

Good Friday 10th April

Hymn – When I survey the wondrous cross

Once a holiday, Good Friday has become an ordinary working day for many. This is as it was on the first Good Friday. Jesus endured a mock trial and then set off with his Cross to be crucified between two convicted thieves. Peter had denied that he ever knew Jesus and most of the other disciples had fled away. Think for a moment of Jesus' loneliness, his utter humiliation, the mocking and jeering, the sheer agony of crucifixion.

Jesus died.

Address: Fr Jeremy

Chapter 6 *Living Water*

Readings to look at on your own:

Isaiah 52: 3 – end of Ch 53

Hebrews 4: 14-18 & 5: 7-9

Read the Passion of St John 18:1 – end of Ch 19

This Holy Week we have been following the book *'I Thirst' The Cross – The Great Triumph of Love* by Stephen Cottrell. It comes at a time when we are not, as we would normally do at All Saints following the journey from Palm Sunday through Maundy Thursday before today, Good Friday, before celebrating the joy of the Easter Vigil tomorrow within the beautiful George Street building. Instead we are asked this year in the light of the horrendous suffering being faced by the world through COVID-19 to contemplate and pray within our homes.

As a congregation those that are able will be able to stream the services from Oxford of this Holy Week in the company of our Bishops. We hope that the sermons from Jo Sheppard, Jeanette Lock and me, alongside a simple liturgy of symbols that you can have at home will help you feel the different emotions of the week and enjoy the Easter joy.

Today I am sharing though the Cross of Good Friday with the help of Stephen's book. The chapter called *Living Water* is the source of many of these thoughts. Stephen begins by contemplating the experience of the followers at the cross knowing that their hopes are dashed. *'Standing there, watching him die, his friends would have marvelled at his resilience and graciousness. But in the end that is all it was.'* There is no hope found here just emptiness and desolation and the World at this time is sadly in tune with those feelings. And yet, as the Gospel reading of the Passion shows it is in death that we can find New Life.

Firstly, let me say that the words of Jesus on the cross *'My God, my God, why hath thou forsaken me'* have never, in my mind, been completely without hope. At many a funeral over my 26 years ministry I have used these words to say that this is about the God who is in the world alongside us in our sufferings. He is not somewhere out there disconnected from this

world, but in the midst of the misery caused by this terrible virus. It is in the death that one of the soldiers pierces Jesus' side with a spear and water and blood comes out. (John 19: 34). As St Paul says, *Death has been swallowed up in victory, Where O death is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?* (1Corinthians 15: 54-55).

Those of you that were present at my 25th anniversary of priesting Mass for SS Peter & Paul last summer will recall the image of the stole given me by Fr Jeremy Winston (the wonderful priest from Wales who influenced so many young people in the faith) on my first anniversary. The stole that Jo Towers recreated on the top of that delicious cake from that day, of the passionflower, growing out of the cross reminds us of the new life coming out of the death of the cross. *'It is a new way of seeing the death'* says Cottrell. *'The cross is a meeting point between life and death, between despair and hope. It is a gateway into heaven, one that passes through the way of suffering and death.'*

The best way I can describe this is from the death of our dearly beloved Elaine. The lady who gave 18 years within our Parish Office welcoming those who sought, in different ways, the love of God. As I said at her funeral, *'on St David's Day, the day before she died, she made all of us feel at ease, making it better for us'*. Elaine believed that Jesus died and rose again, she loved Holy Week and each year read one of the readings from the Easter Vigil where resurrection life overcomes death. On the Monday early in the evening Elaine moved from Life to Death peacefully and even in death she made the family and me feel just a little better.

Elaine believed with us that *'the dead wood of Jesus' cross became the tree of Life'* as Stephen puts it in his book. The blood and water that come from his side remind us *'that the crucifixion is the place where suffering and death are turned around.'* Those signs of water and blood are the sacramental signs by which we are incorporated into Jesus' family and given food for the journey to heaven found in the Eucharist. The water reminding us of Baptism when we became beloved adopted sons and daughters of Christ and the blood of the Eucharist that enables us to partake of the body of Christ to become the Body of Christ. This is the greatest gift that can be offered – the Gift of New Life. That gift, although it will not be offered this day of Good Friday will be offered on your behalf by me on Easter Day.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
With my prayers,
Fr Jeremy

Suggested Music:

Crux Fidelis: John IV of Portugal faithful Cross, above all other, the one and holy tree.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-k4D1mGSWg>

Bairstow Lamentations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MBRWFA7PNI>

Victoria: Passion according to John

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HSOBILgYAA&list=RD_HSOBILgYAA&start_radio=1&t=0)

[v=_HSOBILgYAA&list=RD_HSOBILgYAA&start_radio=1&t=0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HSOBILgYAA&list=RD_HSOBILgYAA&start_radio=1&t=0)

Holy Saturday 11th April

Hymn choice - This is the night of New Beginnings by Bernadette Farrell

This was the day Jesus' body was prepared for burial; what a surprise lay in store!

Ordinarily the New Fire is kindled, the Paschal Candle lit and brought into Church for a Festival of Light. The Exultet is sung, Baptismal Vows are renewed and the First Mass of Easter is celebrated followed by Easter hospitality.