

Letter to the Parish

The end of our season of Lent is becoming increasingly bleak, as fear and distress grow in the face of COVID-19. For those who are suffering from symptoms of coughs and colds, the isolation that accompanies such sickness is especially hard: the world seems distant; the company, comfort and reassurance of others restricted. Sometimes, all that we find we can do is simply pray "help"! Our journey through Lent now takes us to Holy Week, the remembrance of the final week of Jesus' life. It begins with Palm Sunday, with joyful shouts announcing the coming of the Lord. Yet, as the week progresses, the tone becomes increasingly sombre, from the agonised cries of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane to the jeers of the crowds as He is crucified. Then, after the silence of Holy Saturday, we finally come to the pinnacle of the Church year, the culmination of the salvation story: the Resurrection of Christ; and with it, we celebrate the victory of righteousness over sin, of love over hatred, and of life over death. He is Risen indeed – alleluia! What joy is there to be found in this most glorious celebration; in fact, what insight is to be gained from this most profound celebration: as we walk with Jesus through the events of Holy Week, we find echoes of His life

in ours, or rather, our life in His. Holy Week presents us a story of human experience: a story of betrayal, rejection, isolation, humiliation, anguish, pain, suffering, and death... but that was not and is not the end of the story. For Jesus shared in our mortal human body; yet, He was also divine. For in coming to share in our humanity, Jesus opened a path to us to share in His divinity, that is, our faith participates us in His life, and in doing so, His victory over death. The great mystery of Christ's death and resurrection opens to us eternal life; through our faith and God's grace, we have hope in a vision of the heavenly kingdom, where the sorrow we know in this life will be turned to joy in the next. Yet, we will still know sorrow and fear and suffering and death in this life; but as we walk with Christ this Eastertide through His Passion, death and Resurrection, let us draw strength and comfort from the knowledge that nothing in this world "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39, NRSV). So, let us rest in this love; let us pray for ourselves and all who suffer in body, mind and spirit; and let us draw near with faith and renew our hope in the gift of everlasting life with Him.

I wish you all a blessed remainder of Lent and a truly joyful Easter.

Gemma Green



Good News April 2020

Prayer for April

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our human flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Palm Sunday Collect ©Common Worship:
Services and Prayers for the Church of England, 2000*

The streets we will pray for this month are:

Elm Close, Esher Close, Fletcher Close, Gloster Drive, Golden Acre, Greenlea Avenue, Greenways, Hadlands, Harbour Road, Harbour View Road and Heron Mead.