



Association Cultuelle de L'Église Anglicane du Pas de Calais
BOULOGNE CONGREGATION

April 2017 Newsletter

Fellowship, Hope and Love

No. 57

Dear All

If you have struggled, like me, to understand T.S. Eliot's esoteric and at times impenetrable poem: 'The Waste Land' you will not have forgotten the open stanza:

*APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.*

Not unnaturally, with all the joys of spring bursting forth, one might be forgiven for being slightly perplexed at first reading. But continue on :

*'Winter kept us warm, covering-
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding -A little life
with dried tubers'*

Alongside the coming of warmer and lighter days, April is the month in the Christian calendar when Holy Week most frequently falls, as it does this year. Here we are drawn into the harsh realities of the Passion in juxtaposition with the beauty of new birth; all that pain and suffering, Jesus's betrayal after contributing so much to the human race, finally ending in a cruel death on the cross under a dark sky. In winter we had Christmas and Carnival and could justifiably stave off many tasks until the spring and stay warm; all appeared well. But that has to give way to something else.

'Now it was just before the Passover Festival Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' - John 13:1. This year that Passover Festival falls between April 10th and 18th April - our Holy Week and Easter and there is no period more poignant to wake us up to both the cruel reality and beauty of life once more.

Eliot became a member of the Anglican Church in 1927, five years after publishing 'The Waste Land', but described himself as an Anglo-Catholic. Doubtless the church had a strong influence on his life and far be it for me to adapt the words of a poetic genius, but dare I interpret: 'cruellest' as 'most challenging'? Our faith is always every bit that – and so it should be.

Below Michael Spriggs of Hesdin reflects on one of the key figures in the story of the Passion who was very challenged, but was he up to the task and did he make the right decision?

"... Suffered under Pontius Pilate"

This line, so familiar from the Nicene Creed, has always intrigued me. The reference to Pilate, then Governor of Judaea, for me relates the dramatic spirituality of the events that led up to Jesus' crucifixion to the sheer mundane reality of life under Israel's Roman occupiers.

What do we know of Pontius Pilate?

As so often in the early Christian church, the record is sketchy. The principal source is of course, the gospels, though he was also referred to in the writings of later Jewish chroniclers. Now, a remarkable discovery was made in 1961, which confirmed indisputably the historical existence of Pilate. Archaeologists discovered in Caesarea (Rome's administrative centre in Judaea) a stone block, probably a fragment of a temple, dedicated to the Emperor Tiberius, and stating that Pilate was indeed Prefect (Governor) of Judaea.



Wild daffodils -*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*

Piecing together the fragments that survive, this is a Roman governor who does not come out of it well. He is variously described as cruel, weak-willed, impetuous and ineffectual. But – the key to his role in this momentous drama – and one on which the gospels are universally in agreement - is that Pilate was reluctant to condemn Jesus.

Jesus had been brought before Pilate by the chief priests, accusing him of blasphemy: Jesus' claim to be King of the Jews was a challenge to Roman rule, punishable by death. But, when questioned by Pilate, in the face of growing hostility from the crowd, who were demanding his crucifixion, Jesus remained silent.

And yet in Matthew, Pilate responds, "Why? What evil has he done?" Matthew adds that, before condemning Jesus to death, Pilate says "I am innocent of this man's blood" – and, in front of the baying crowd, symbolically 'washes his hands' with water. (An expression that has passed into common usage to indicate when avoiding moral responsibility)

The enigmas remain: but for me, these references to Pontius Pilate in a strange way provide a tangible grounding to the eternal story of the Passion of Christ.



Planned services at the chapel of the Monastère du Carmel, 2 rue du Denacre, Saint-Martin-Boulogne

Sunday 2nd April 2017 10h30 / Fifth Sunday in Lent - Morning Prayer with hymns and readings led by Paul and Lalage Glaister followed by cakes and coffee and the Boulogne AGM

Sunday 16th April 2017 11h00 / Easter Day - Eucharist led by Sara MacVane, Readings: Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18

Sunday May 7th 2017 / Fourth Sunday of Easter - Morning Prayer with hymns and readings led by Colin and Jackie Ley

Sunday May 21st 2017 / Sixth Sunday of Easter - Eucharist service to be taken by the Rev. Simon Braid of St John's Church, Hildenborough near Tonbridge in Kent: Readings: Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

News and a date for your diary:

The Chaplaincy AGM will be held on Sunday 30th April at the St. Nicholas Centre, Calais Beau-Marais, following a Eucharist taken by Sara MacVane. The service will start at 11h00. A meal will be served at the end of the meeting.

Maundy Thursday Supper. A Paschal service followed by a traditional lamb supper will be held at the home in La Capelle les Boulogne of Linda and Jean Marc Pillière, starting at 19h00. Please let Linda or Jean-Marc know by April 6th if you will be attending. ☎: 03 21 32 49 76



We extend a warm welcome in May to the Rev. Simon Braid of St John's Hildenborough. Simon was ordained in 2009 after an accountancy career. He lives with wife, Susie, in Penshurst and they have three grown-up children. Simon is passionate about communicating the gospel in new ways and finding Jesus at work in the community.

Happy Easter



EASTER MESSAGE 2017

“Purity of heart is to will one thing”, said the Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard. I write these words near the beginning of Lent, a season in which we try even more seriously than usual to order our desires under the overarching desire for God. Since our desires are continually stimulated, manipulated and exploited by powerful forces in the world, Lenten disciplines of even moderate asceticism are strongly counter-cultural and have seldom been more valuable in promoting true spiritual life.

It has been a particular delight for me that the daily lectionary this Lent has us reading through the prophet Jeremiah. Few other biblical characters exemplify such a single-minded longing after God and his purposes. For 40 years, Jeremiah faced the political situation of his day with utter realism. He helped his people navigate their way through one of the most disturbing times in their history – the huge discontinuity and disruption marked by exile in Babylon. Against the false prophets, who disseminated an easy message of ‘business as usual’, Jeremiah is unflinching in proclaiming that God is faithful, but that a very different kind of hope and a so far unimagined future lie on the other side of a painful judgement. “I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “to give you a future and a hope. You will seek me and you will find me when you seek me with all your heart.” (Jer. 29:11). Jeremiah provides a suggestive backdrop to Easter. In his book “Outside Eden – Finding Hope in an Imperfect World”, Peter Fisher counters the idea that Easter is an exercise in mere wish fulfilment. We have plenty of evidence to suggest that the disciples who followed Jesus were expecting that, having given up homes, fishing businesses and so on, they would be rewarded with a relatively smooth path to greatness in the kingdom of God. They had, we know, been in the habit of discussing the various positions of honour they could expect. But Jesus’s death seemed to be the unexpected end of their hopes. And Jesus’s resurrection - a new spiritual body - was quite outside the rational categories that had so far been available to them. So the shape of the hope that opens up before the disciples on Easter Day is quite different from anything they had previously known. And, not surprisingly, the new resurrection order dramatically changes the character and capacities of the disciples too.

For most of us, Easter Sunday morning is epitomised by the reading of St. John’s account of Mary Magdalene meeting her risen Lord in the garden. I have been struck, in re-reading this text, by the repeated ‘turning’ of Mary. She is the first to see the empty tomb. After running away in fright, she returns with Peter and the other unnamed disciple. Having seen the empty tomb, the others depart, but Mary remains, standing weeping outside the tomb. When the gardener engages her in conversation she ‘turns around’ and sees Jesus, though without recognising him. It is in the face to face conversation between them, and in particular when Jesus speaks her name, ‘Mary’, that she recognises the risen Lord.

Rowan Williams comments (in ‘Resurrection – Interpreting the Easter Gospel’): “She, the one who had turned, again and again, in ever-dwindling hope, now finds that hope answered. Turning, over and again, to the name, the figure, the recollection of Jesus, even when it can only seem abstract and remote, issues at last in knowing with utter clarity that it is still he who calls us into our unique identity.” It is in turning, *metanoia* or conversion (or re-conversion) that we find Jesus and are found by him. Thus Mary finds a new future and a new hope.

Easter 2017 greets an uncertain and fearful European continent. The achievements of the post-war decades are being radically questioned. The story of smooth progress towards an ever-more prosperous, liberal and globalised future is being angrily protested against. Yet we don’t know what could replace it. The European Commission has published a White Paper that offers five very different scenarios, and both Protestant and Catholic Churches are holding conferences on ‘The Future of Europe’. There is, as yet, little in the way of genuinely convincing and inspiring ways forward. We feel ourselves to be in a kind of ‘Holy Saturday’, with old hopes having gone and a new vision yet to crystallise. If that is our situation, we can take courage from Jeremiah, who assures his readers of a future and a hope that lie, not in the immediate present, but on the other side of exile. For Christians, faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things

not yet seen (Hebrews 11:1). And so, in the purposes of God, Easter bursts upon us in unexpected ways with the promise of a future that we cannot yet specify.

Whatever the vagaries of human history, the seasons of the natural world are a tangible reminder of the faithfulness of God. Each year, the flowers grow and the trees blossom. As I write this, my daffodils are just starting to show the first yellow of Spring. I am reminded that amidst the sad Lamentations of Jeremiah (which are traditionally read on Good Friday), the prophet can nonetheless declare: "The Lord's compassions never fail, they are new every morning: Great is your faithfulness!"

In closing, I want to thank all our clergy and lay people who will be involved in the preparation and conduct of worship for Holy Week and Easter. I wish insight and skill especially to those who will be endeavouring to communicate the Easter message in ways that will connect with regular churchgoers and visitors alike. I hope and pray that people will turn to meet the risen Lord in the welcome and worship we offer.

I wish you all a blessed and joyful Easter

+ Robert Gibbon in Europe

Prayer Diary / Intercessions - A book is available for the entry of names of those who anyone wishes to have included in the intercessory prayers during the service. Otherwise please pass a note to the person responsible for the intercessions on that day.

If anyone needs any form of help or assistance or if you are aware of someone who is ill, either in hospital or at home and would appreciate a visit; alternatively if you know of anyone who you feel may benefit from prayer, please contact our church warden: George Murray ☎ 03 21 36 53 87, e-mail: georgemurray@sfr.fr.

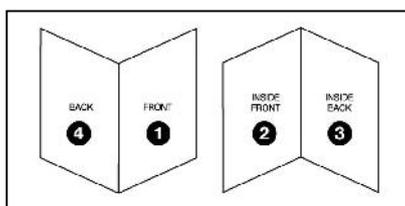
Other services in the Chaplaincy: Calais's regular services: Services are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month at 10h30. The normal place of worship is now the Oratoire Notre Dame de la Misericorde, rue Gaillard, Calais – (near St Pierre's church). Church Warden: Pat Page ☎ 03 21 35 07 65 or e-mail: pat.page@wanadoo.fr

Hesdin's regular services: Services are held as follows: 1st Sunday monthly – Morning Prayer 10h30; 3rd Sunday monthly – 17h00 Eucharist. Services are held in Salle de l'Arsenal, Rue de l'Arsenal, Hesdin - Church Warden: Hazel Crompton, ☎ 03 21 03 31 27 e-mail: james.crompton@free.fr

Our Facebook page can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/Pas-de-Calais-Anglican-Church>

This newsletter can be found, together with other information about the Chaplaincy, on our website at: <http://www.anglicanspdc.com>



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New take on an old idea...

