

News from the Village Churches

Dear friends,

I expect you know the old hymn or 'spiritual': 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?'

O, sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Subsequent verses ask *Were you there when they laid him in the tomb; Were you there when they nailed him to a tree;* and finally *'Were you there when he rose to glorious life?'*

Of course the simple historical answer is 'No, I wasn't', - and perhaps you want to add 'so what's it got to do with me?' - apart from the fact that I get a long weekend holiday out of it!

Christians, of course, know that it has *everything* to do with them, because we are baptised into the *death and resurrection* of Jesus Christ. The job of those who have been baptised is to live the truth they have accepted: that *the death and resurrection of Jesus has everything to do with everybody, everywhere.*

When we say, in whatever trembling, uncertain, or committed way we can, that *'Jesus is Lord'*, then we are beginning to say that the answer to the question in the song is *'Yes, I was there'*. Why and how there? Because if Jesus is who and what he said himself to be, and the church proclaims him to be - and if not there's absolutely no point to any of this - then on the cross Jesus has taken, accepted, carried, born, involved himself in, confronted, faced up to, however you can think of putting it, all the pain, agony, grief, separation, despair, of all the world - including you and me. Not only that but we know very well that *we, you and me and everybody, cause much pain and suffering of the world:* by our direct actions and deliberate choices, by our indifference, or our greed. We were there, we *are* there because we are part of humanity. We were there, we *are* there because it is our, *my* actions or failures that *'nailed him to the tree'*, and our lack of love that continues to do so in a suffering world. We *are* there, because we know that each of us will die, and go down into the tomb, as far as possible from life, and love and laughter. Jesus has been there, so God has shared in that part of being a human being, too. In Jesus, God knows the depth of all our fears and pain, grief and abandonment: *'My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?'*

Which brings us to the final question, *'Were you there when he rose to glorious life?'* If we can only say 'yes' to the other questions in the sense 'well, only because I am included willy-nilly as a human being', then this final question is the point at which we, each of us has, *you* have, to make a decision. None of us is outside God's love, and he wants each and all of us to be included - he's *dying* for us to return his love - but we have to make our response. It's not automatic, and there's no compulsion, just love: either we say (however hesitatingly or uncertainly) *yes* - and begin to find that 'in Christ, God has made all things new', that God's *'Love changes everything'*, new life, for ever, for everybody. Or we say 'no'.

But why not, this Easter, say, even if uncertainly, 'yes', and find out what difference this day makes?

With love in the crucified and risen Lord, *Fr Richard*

A message from the Archdeacon of Horsham

What a difference a day makes

There should have been a public inquiry. It was a scandal that the police allowed it to happen. The guard was there precisely to stop it, and to save the authorities being embarrassed. There had been rumours that something was afoot. The rest is history.

GONE

No-one saw what happened, but everyone was clear that something had happened. The women who went early to the tomb saw it was no longer sealed but open and empty. The body, which they had seen placed there on Friday when it was sealed and put under armed guard, was gone. Enemies of Jesus were unable to explain it or produce the body.

ALIVE

Witnesses began to come forward to say they had seen the formerly dead Jesus alive and in various circumstances - on a road, in a room, by a lake. They even saw him eat a piece of cooked fish. They said he talked with them and explained what God was doing. Their hearts lifted. Their courage returned. These early believers were soon joined by thousands of others in the very city where Jesus had been crucified, including priests and people from across the known world. All the sermons from the early church recorded in the book of Acts in the Bible speak of the significance of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead. It mattered.

RISEN INDEED

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Hundreds of millions of people will say these words this month and mean them. In fact, the reason Christian people meet week by week on a Sunday (rather than say on a Saturday) is to mark the day Christ was raised from the dead. Each week we draw strength from what that day signifies.

HOPE

So what difference does it make? It shows that death was defeated and does not have the last word; that he died for our sin and forgiveness has been secured; that Jesus is Lord; and that we can trust him when he said to his disciples 'I am going to prepare a place for you, so that where I am you may be also.' In short, resurrection hope.

Happy Easter! *Roger Coombes*

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News from the Village Churches, cont

WORSHIP IN THE VALLEY PARISH

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you because by your cross you have redeemed the world

HOLY WEEK

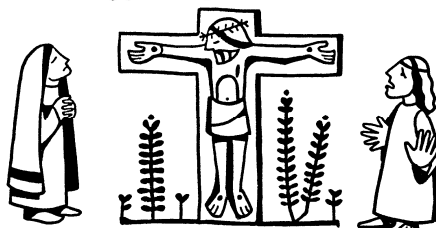


28th Palm Sunday (4th Sunday)
 8am Eucharist **EAST DEAN**
 10am Palm Procession & Family Eucharist **WEST DEAN**
for all ages **WEST DEAN**
 6pm Evening Prayer **WEST DEAN**



My father, if it is possible let this cup pass me by

1st Maundy Thursday
 7:30pm Eucharist of the Lord's Supper **SINGLETON**
followed by Watch at altar of repose for 1 hour



2nd GOOD FRIDAY
 10am Family Worship **WEST DEAN**
 12 noon Liturgy of the Day **SINGLETON**
sung Passion Gospel & Communion
 2pm At the foot of the Cross **EAST DEAN**
readings, prayers, and meditation



3rd Holy Saturday - EASTER EVE **Easter Vigil**
 7:30pm Ceremony of Light, Easter Vigil, and first Eucharist of Easter **SINGLETON**

4th EASTER DAY (1st Sunday)
 8am Eucharist **SINGLETON**
 10am Parish Eucharist **EAST DEAN**
 6pm Eucharist **WEST DEAN**



Alleluia Alleluia Alleluia

11th 2nd of Easter (2nd Sunday)
 8am Eucharist **EAST DEAN**
 10am Parish Eucharist **SINGLETON**
 6pm Evensong (with choir) **WEST DEAN**

25th 4th of Easter (4th Sunday)
 8am Eucharist **EAST DEAN**
 10am Family Eucharist **EAST DEAN**
 6pm Evening Prayer **WEST DEAN**

18th 3rd of Easter (3rd Sunday)
 8am Eucharist **SINGLETON**
 10am Parish Eucharist **WEST DEAN**
 6pm Evening Prayer **EAST DEAN**

Sunday School
 Sunday School activities during the Parish Eucharist on 1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays