

Roath News



PENTECOST 2021

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THE PARISH OF ROATH, CARDIFF

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The Clergy are always available to minister to the sick and dying. Please inform the clergy of sickness. Holy Communion may be received at home by those who are unable to come to church.

*The Parish Surgery is open on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) between 6.00.p.m. and 7.00.p.m. in Roath Church House to arrange **Baptisms and Weddings**. (Contact no. 20487854).*

Confessions and the Sacrament of Healing by arrangement.

Copy date for the next magazine (Summer) is 21st June

Letters sent by email from the Vicar of Roath, the Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk during the Coronavirus lockdown

Newsletter 7 March

My dear Friends,

Our season of Lent continues, we approach the midway point of the 40 weekdays. The English name Lent is different from the Latin term 'quadregesima' meaning 40 days, which in turn gives us the Italian, Spanish and French words which all mention the number of days. The word Lent comes from the old English word meaning lengthen referring to the increasing daylight we enjoy in Spring. It is certainly good to see signs of the changing seasons. The snowdrops have passed, the daffodils are in full array and the hyacinths and bluebells in the Vicarage garden are making tentative appearances.

Another joyful sign of spring are the nesting birds in our trees and hedges. They are constantly working to establish their woody homes and striving to feed their hungry young in all weathers and conditions. They constantly adapt to the changing conditions and yet sing giving us a reminder of the beauty of creation and God's faithfulness. I wonder whether we would be so sanguine if we had annually to rebuild our homes and scavenge to put food on the table! Times are tough for many people at the moment but many of us still are blessed with the security of home and the knowledge that we have our daily needs met.

Our Churches are also still there for our worship and the delivery of the Sacraments. People may still come for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, even if the way we offer them are different from former occasions. There have had to be changes in all parts of our lives over the last year and inevitably we have been unsettled and sometimes distressed by them. We are reminded in our Gospel this week (John Ch 2, v13 -22) that Jesus saw the need for change and challenge as he visited the temple in Jerusalem. There he found the money changers and the traders abusing their positions and making God's house a marketplace. They had become more concerned with providing people with the right cash and creatures that were acceptable for temple sacrifices than the true meaning and worth of their faith.

Jesus even went as far as saying he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Those listening took him literally and could not

understand how such a task could be performed as the temple had taken forty six years to build. He was speaking figuratively and referring to his future death and resurrection. He was to be seen as the new construction, it was the temple of his body. This was only apparent to the disciples after he had risen from the dead. Although we may find it hard to cope and understand the circumstances in which we are living and the uncertainties that may befall us, let us be reassured that if we continue to place our trust in God and his teachings we will come through with greater strength and hope for the future.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 14 March

My dear Friends,

This Sunday we celebrate one of the loveliest days in the Christian Calendar. The Fourth Sunday in Lent is always marked as Mothering Sunday, an event which is happily adopted by the secular world, even though it is called generally Mother's Day. We know that it was a day when in former times youngsters who had gone away to work were allowed home to visit their mothers. It is said they would pick hedgerow spring flowers on the way as a simple nosegay gift for their mothers.

It was also a day when Christians would gather at their 'mother church', for many this would be the Cathedral of the diocese. Both these traditions even if we wanted to follow them would be impossible for us to emulate now under the current legal restrictions that we are under. However we are still allowed to worship in our parish churches following the strict guidelines under the law. Remember this was something we could not do last year as lockdown had begun, our churches were shut and we all thought it would not be too long before things were back to normal!

One of the happier aspects of our services on Mothering Sunday in normal times is the presence of more families with young children. We are usually joined by large numbers of our beavers, cubs and scouts, and their leaders. Normally youngsters from our Sunday Schools are involved by reading the lessons and leading the prayers of intercession. This will not be taking place this coming Sunday. However there is a much valued youthful presence in St Margaret's at this time. Five of our regular choristers are under 18, every week since singing has been permitted,

they have helped lead our worship in anthems and hymns. They are joined by their parents who with other young people make up our small, dedicated but very talented choir at this juncture. A sign of new life to raise our spirits.

This Sunday is also called Refreshment Sunday, a midpoint in Lent when traditionally the fast might be lifted. Those who have kept their discipline so far throughout the season are encouraged to have a break and enjoy some relief. So we can indulge a little! It is a glimpse of the coming joy of Easter. The hope of the future in these days continues for many in the freedom that the vaccine may give. I am so pleased to hear that many of those who read these words have had their first dose, some have had appointments for the second and others have actually received their full amount. Those of us who still wait are also hopeful and full of plans.

Finally as well as all the above, we remember with thanksgiving this Sunday not only our own mothers, whether living or departed but also the Mother of our Lord Jesus the Blessed Virgin Mary. Her care and devotion to her son is an example to all Christians as we seek to follow Jesus in times of joy and sorrow just as Mary did. May God bless all our families and those who live alone as we rejoice and are refreshed in the world wide welcoming family of the Church.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 21 March

My dear Friends,

This Sunday, the fifth in Lent is known as Passion Sunday. Some say the term comes from the Greek verb meaning to suffer or the Latin term for suffering, as we remember the physical and mental pain that Jesus endured at this time. It begins the last fortnight of this reflective season and marks an increase in the solemnity of our worship and church customs. Traditionally all crosses and crucifixes are veiled in purple during this period and then unveiled at the Liturgy of the Day to be revered on Good Friday. The Cross and the Crucifix are very familiar images in our churches, St Margaret's being a cruciform Church is built in the shape of a cross. Many Christians wear crosses and crucifixes as items of jewellery, brooches and badges. Some carry them in their

pockets and many Christian homes will have them on their walls, often above our beds or near our doorways.

The Holy Cross was an important symbol for the early Christians, we even have a day still, the fourteenth of September when we remember the Cross of Christ. However for those who lived at the time of Jesus the cross was the most horrible implement of torture and execution. For the devoted followers of our Lord in his earthly ministry the mere idea that the Messiah they welcomed into their lives should undergo such a fate as crucifixion was abhorrent.

In our Gospel from St John this week we have Jesus referring obliquely to his death. He talks of a grain of wheat which might fall into the ground and die but one that could bear much fruit subsequently. He expresses intimations of knowing that he will suffer. He is troubled but knows that he is placing himself in his Father's care. Jesus says "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. (John Ch 12, v 33,34). The actual mechanics of crucifixion would involve the victim being nailed to the cross on the ground before it would be made upright for all to see. These predictions would have been puzzling and frightening to Jesus' disciples then.

As we look back today with benefit of hindsight and the knowledge of what was to follow we can better understand the purposes of God in this act. We know that Jesus became a man to engage in all aspects of humanity, not only joy and happiness but also in sadness and pain. His participation in the things that people on earth experience in their daily lives at all extremes bring us closer to him as we seek to follow his example. In these coming days as we read the events of the Passion of Christ whether it is in Church or at home let us again place ourselves in our hearts and minds in the position of those who first encountered Jesus here on earth. We can make our final days of Lent this year a time to reflect and pray on the sufferings of this world but with the hope of the joys to come. We do not face these days alone. Remember Jesus' words "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour."

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 28 March – Palm Sunday

My dear Friends,

This Sunday, the fifth in Lent is Palm Sunday, the day that begins the most important week of the Church year, Holy Week. In Welsh we call it Yr Wythnos Fawr, the great or large week. At this time we recall in our Scripture readings and in the Liturgy of the services in our churches the events of the Passion, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus. For those who are at home perhaps you will read in your Bibles the Gospel accounts of these days and imagine them as we do in Church in our mind's eye what our Lord went through on the first Holy Week.

Normally in our parish on Palm Sunday in both our churches we recall the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem with processions. In St Margaret's we gather in Roath Church House, have our palm crosses blessed and walk along Waterloo Rd singing 'All glory laud and honour' to church to continue the Eucharist. In St Edward's we begin in Church and after the palms are blessed we process through Roath Mill Gardens again singing the same hymn. In both cases it is a wonderful act of witness and a public reminder to the community of the importance of this time for Christians in all parts of the world.

Last year the law prevented us from having live church services. This year although public worship is permitted, outdoor gatherings are still forbidden so no processions. We shall still however mark Palm Sunday in a less demonstrative fashion in our services. Perhaps it will help us remember many of our brothers and sisters in the Christian family who live in places where they are persecuted for their faith and are as rule prevented from practicing their beliefs.

When the disciples heard from Jesus that they were to go to Jerusalem they were full of anticipation and hope of what would come. The city of Jerusalem was and still is the most important place for Jewish people. They would go to the city for two reasons, to enthrone or pay homage to the King and secondly to offer sacrifice to God, to celebrate his love, his offer of salvation, his covenant or agreement with the people. The followers of Jesus hoped that now was the time that he would reveal himself to everyone as the Messiah they had awaited so long. They believed he would confront the corrupt elite in the religious leadership and oppose the Roman secular authorities that occupied and cruelly ruled their land. Jesus had warned them of the sufferings that would come to him and those who would follow him. However denying yourself and taking up your

cross had been interpreted as a preacher's rhetoric of hard times but ones that would worth going through for the prize of freedom from oppression.

It all started so well with Jesus riding on a colt the foal of an ass, just as the prophet Zechariah had foretold. The excited crowds greeted him with jubilant cries of hosanna and paid respect to him, paving his path with their garments and palm branches. The prophets words 'Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass!' were ringing in their ears. It was in direct contrast at that moment in history when a Roman general had also arrived in the city with military and civic ceremony proclaiming a very different rule and power.

This is just the beginning of our Holy Week and as the days unfold we shall learn again of the events that transpired and formed the faith that we hold and share. In whatever way and place we pray let us concentrate our reflections on those days and recall what it means for us as we seek to follow in the way of Christ in our time with all that we and our loved ones face.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 4 April - Easter Day

My dear Friends,

Like many people I took advantage of the end of the 'stay local' rule this week. Living where we do means that five miles does not get us out of the City limits. So now we were able to travel to proper, even remote countryside. The bonus was coming upon a field of sheep with dozens of new born lambs gambolling in the Spring sunshine. It was a delightful prospect and perhaps something that in normal times we would not have gazed upon so long.

The sight reminded me of an experience that Bishop David Wilbourne told of when he was a Vicar in rural Yorkshire. He saw a shepherd looking intently for an extended period at his flock in what he thought was pastoral concern. The priest asked the shepherd what was going through his mind, he replied he was contemplating which animals he would send for slaughter. Please don't let that put you off your Easter lunch!

The image and symbol of the Lamb is very much in our worship and scripture at this time of the year. We are told that Jewish families would eat

lamb at the Passover. The animals were sacrificed in the Temple and then taken by the people to their homes and eaten during the night(Exodus 12).For us we look at Christ as the fulfilment of the Passover, 'Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us', (1 Corinthians 5v7) and 'Behold the lamb of God' (John 1v29) makes Jesus the Paschal Lamb.

In the early church a symbol of a lamb with or near a cross was used to represent the sacrifice of Christ, as seen in the catacombs of San Callisto, Rome from the third century. Closer to home, at university my College principal who was a strict teetotaler had a view from his study window of a very old pub named the 'Lamb and Flag' He could take consolation however that this is of course a symbol of the Resurrection. The flag bears the red cross of St George in most British representations but that is there not for patriotic reasons but to tell us that the sacrificed lamb of God, our Lord Jesus suffers death on the cross but escaped through his victory over death.

We recall this too at every Eucharist when we say or sing the words of the Agnes Dei, ' Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world'. We have come through this Lent maybe with feelings of sadness and anxiety because of what we have all known in this past year.

Nevertheless we are given in the message of Good Friday the knowledge that God in the crucified Jesus fully engages in the sufferings of this world yet conquers all in the triumph of the Resurrection. May the new life we all have in the Risen Lord bring you and your loved ones joy, every blessing and hope for the future as we celebrate together as an Easter People.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 11 April

My dear Friends,

As we tentatively and cautiously ease ourselves out of lockdown and venture outdoors we are all experiencing new and different things. I have seen people in person who I would normally see regularly yet have not in some cases seen for over a year. One of the conversations that seems to repeat it itself is the sense of unbelief of what has happened in the last twelve months. The sentence begins "Who would have thought.....?" or "Can you believe that it has been so long since we could...." The tragic events of the pandemic few would have imagined possible this time last

year and the impact that they have made upon our lives has been extraordinary to say the least.

Those of you who were at Choral Evensong on Easter Day would have heard the Gospel reading telling us the encounter of the disciples with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. They did not at first recognise him and told him of the amazing events of what we call Holy Week, Christ's Passion, trial, crucifixion and resurrection. They were incredible to them and all their fellow disciples. Later Jesus himself explained the significance of the happenings to them and they then knew him as he broke bread with them.

In our Eucharist Gospel this week from St John Chapter 20, we hear of another meeting of Jesus with the disciples, they see him risen from the dead in a private room. He offers them a sign of peace and gives them the authority to offer forgiveness of sins. One of the twelve Thomas is not with them and when he hears of the appearance he refuses to believe it is true. Unless he sees it for himself and touches Jesus wounds he will not accept it is possible. The following week Jesus appeared again to the disciples and this time Thomas is present. The doubting disciple is given his wish, he sees and touches the body of the resurrected Jesus in his presence and believes. Poor Thomas must have felt ashamed at his doubt though thankfully for us he did express that perfectly natural scepticism. Jesus knows that not all will see his risen self and therefore have to rely on the testimony of others, we are of that number. We should be reassured by Jesus words "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe".

In the great East window at St Edwards we see a stained glass artist's representation of the risen Christ. If we look carefully we can see the marks of the nails in his hands and feet. We know too it is a post Resurrection Jesus as he stands by an empty cross and has the branch of Palm Sunday in his hand referring back to those occasions. In these fifty days of the Easter season we will hear as this week of Jesus message of forgiveness of sins and peace and love to all who seek to follow him. As we will soon hear he commissioned his followers to spread that good news. Maybe as we take the opportunity to go out and see people we can try to be like those early disciples and share God's love in new ways to our neighbours and friends who have all known sadness, anxiety and uncertainty over the last year for in the risen Christ there is always hope for the future.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 18 April

My dear Friends,

One of the things we have missed in the various lockdowns we have been experiencing over the last year is the ability to share even the simplest hospitality with one another anywhere indoors. This is still the case. Many of you I know in normal times enjoy sharing meals with your extended family or friends, not necessarily grand dinner parties but the everyday family meals that we need to nourish us but also to develop the social and personal relationships with our friends and neighbours, with our children and their friends. It is good to be able to share conversations across the age range and with people who we only occasionally see over food and drink. We have missed the special treats of a pub lunch or a restaurant dinner to celebrate a birthday or anniversary. At least we can look forward to catching up on these eventually!

So much of our regular Church life has in the past been based around the sharing of meals. Our longstanding luncheon club was I know a weekly highlight for many for food and friendship. Our enormously successful and valued Forget me not Cafe was enhanced by tea and delicious cake. On special occasions following great services we proudly entertained as a parish in St Edwards Community Room and Roath Church House with buffet receptions. Concerts in our churches were often followed by coffee or in the evenings, a glass of wine.

Our Sunday and weekday services are of prime importance to us as a parish. When they are followed by opportunities of getting to know each other over a coffee/tea and a biscuit this has made the difference to a newcomer attending again and feeling welcomed and even part of the worshipping family of the Church. These social interactions will I hope come back in the fullness of time and we will appreciate them all the more intently.

Many of our Lord Jesus encounters with people during his earthly ministry involved food and drink. His first miracle saw him turn water into wine at the marriage at Cana. We see him asking for hospitality from Zacchaeus and Matthew. He persists in eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners in spite of the Pharisees objections. He shares meals with Mary and Martha and uses such occasions to deliver his teaching to his inner circle. By contrast he feeds thousands of hungry people who come to

hear him preach. He calls himself the Bread of Life and says that he will give people Living Water.

Most important of all at the last supper, he tells the twelve that they are to remember him by eating bread and wine which is for us his body and blood. In spite of all the restrictions we are under now we can at least continue to obey this command of Jesus, even if in revised form, as we week by week receive the Blessed Sacrament. For those who are prevented from doing so and remain at home we recognise your pain and loss at this but be assured you are with us in spirit at all times especially at the moment of communion.

Our Gospel reading this week from St Luke describes another Resurrection appearance of Jesus. Following the meeting on the road to Emmaus Jesus is known to the disciples in the breaking of the bread, at the Sea of Galilee he prepares fish for the hungry fishermen. It is in a domestic scene that Jesus asks for food and unsurprisingly is given broiled fish. He eats it in their presence. This is not the act of a ghost, they are again shown the very clear marks of the crucifixion. This meeting joins the ordinary with the extraordinary, the sharing of food amongst friends but with the risen Son of God. The Messiah takes the opportunity to reinforce the triumphant message of death and resurrection, and the gift of forgiveness of sins. The sharing of hospitality is coupled with a commission for them to proclaim this good news to all nations. As we today share in the fellowship of our faith let us pray that we will do our part in spreading the generous love of God to all.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 25 April

My dear Friends,

One of my earliest memories in the Ordained Ministry was of my time when I was a Curate 33 years ago in the parish of Glan Ely, Church of the Resurrection. I regularly visited the seven junior and infant schools in the parish leading assemblies and taking RE lessons. One day, the then Bishop of Llandaff, Roy Davies was making one of his parish visits where he would spend a day seeing the 'normal routine' of his clergy and people. Father Bob Morgan the Vicar and I took him to one of the infant school assemblies. The children were familiar with their own clergy but

not sure what a Bishop was. Father Morgan endeavoured to explain. Bishop Roy was dressed in his purple cassock and carrying a simple pastoral staff. The Vicar told the children that the staff was a shepherd's crook and the Bishop was the shepherd or chief pastor of his flock, all the Church people in his diocese. The youngsters seemed satisfied, however one child asked "What are you and Father Lisk then?" In inimitable style Father Morgan swiftly replied, "Well, we are the sheep dogs, that's why we wear collars!"

This week our Gospel from St John, Chapter 10, v11-18 has Jesus describing himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. At this stage in the gospel before his crucifixion and resurrection he is only hinting at the great sacrifice that is to come. Here his listeners understand him to be talking of his unflinching service to them. A good shepherd has a deep knowledge and commitment to his charges. As well as being willing to take risks to care for them in extreme circumstances he is known to them and they respond to him. In the time of Jesus and in the contemporary care of flocks, the sheep would actually listen to the voice of their shepherd rather than being gathered by dogs and whistles. We can see how this has been used as a model for ordained parish ministry.

The Gospel message extends into the wider role of the Church. Jesus links himself with his Father who knows him and is known by him. We as clergy often in these days work alone but we know we are part of a body of Deacons, Priests and Bishops who are called in various roles to serve the people of God in the area we live and work. The clergy are not as numerous as they were only a few years ago but our Diocesan vision encourages us to work together more across our present parish structures and develop new ways of fulfilling our roles with even greater involvement of Lay ministry.

As we prepare this week for our Annual Vestry on Monday 26 April at which we elect our officers, PCC and church committee members do ask yourselves what roles you might offer or encourage others to take on. There will be changes in the organisation and of our churches and parishes in the coming year but this will mean more opportunities to become part of this shared leadership and commitment to the mission of the church. No longer can the clergy be seen as the pastors working alone but more and more with the people of the parishes and five churches of our proposed Ministry Area. We have a wonderful tradition of lay involvement in the parish of Roath. I am conscious of the huge efforts many have put into their church duty and service. However there is

always room for others to come and be part of this pastoral work. Being a Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Sunday School or Youth Worker caring for the elderly or needy is just as much as being part of the parish community as any other. Let us listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd and answer his call to help spread the Good News in Roath and Cathays.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

Newsletter 2 May.

My dear Friends,

From time to time we see comment in our newspapers criticising the clergy from becoming involved in politics. Whenever one of our Archbishops or Bishops are quoted speaking on an issue to do with health, education or international aid there is often a politician who will respond saying that they should concern themselves with the spiritual life and not meddle in the affairs of the nation. They continue to do it not deterred by the fate of religious leaders such as Thomas a Becket, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King or Archbishop Romero who all at different points in history suffered the ultimate sacrifice for expressing their views.

The present Archbishop of Canterbury is known for his interest in the political life of the nation. Born into a family where he was made to watch the Budget at four years old with a member of the Cabinet in his immediate family circle. He has written books on current affairs and does not shy from speaking on the major issues of the day. One of the reasons that clergy give for becoming acquainted with the purposes of government is not because they wish to support publicly any party but rather that they are concerned for the welfare of people both at home and abroad. They want to see a fair and just society where young and old are cared for and everyone may have opportunities to flourish and succeed for the good of themselves and the wider community. Most party politicians would agree with these aims but all have different solutions as to how to achieve them.

In my role as Civic Chaplain I have met and got to know various politicians of most parties over the last thirty years. Many of them are sincere Christians and some devout members of other great world religions and feel that their beliefs inform their desire to serve the

communities in which we live. They are often from widely differing backgrounds and social groups reflecting the extraordinary diversity of our capital city. The Services and Commemorations that I have written and conducted over the decades have always tried to mirror that character of our nation. This week again many candidates are asking for our votes in the election on Thursday, those of you who have the privilege and duty of the franchise please go to our polling stations or use your postal votes. It is a hard won right.

In our Gospel this week Jesus says "I am the true vine and my Father is the vine grower" (John Chapter 15). His listeners would have been familiar with vines and how they grow from small plants but with eventually many different branches. As the plant matures it can be difficult to see where it began. A good vine will also bear much fruit which can be delicious and nourishing as itself, or when made into juice or wine. However if a branch is broken or separated from its roots it will no longer be of use and not bear fruit. All the branches may look alike and produce similar looking fruit but they are each unique. This is symbolic of Jesus' call to each of us. He calls us in our uniqueness to become joined with him in a shared purpose of spreading the love and care of God wherever we are, wherever we come from and whatever race, culture or background we are from. If we adhere to the teachings of Jesus and the message that he brings to the world we will be able to share good fruit of benefit to everyone. Let us pray that all who are elected this week may be given strength and a will to share in that purpose of caring for our nation and people as we go forward to face the many challenges set before us. Best wishes and prayers

Newsletter 9 May

My dear Friends,

I remember one sunny warm May when I was a teenager visiting Oxford with my parents. We had gone to see my sister who was an undergraduate there at the time. These regular visits always entailed a walk around the ancient city exploring new sights and historic buildings. On this particular occasion as we strolled along we saw a priest with some servers, choristers and lay members of the congregation processing through the streets. They were carrying bamboo canes and were hitting the pavement as they went along. It was my first experience of witnessing the old practice of 'beating the bounds'. Such observations

have been made for centuries in the church. For a while they were suppressed in the turbulent Tudor times, but Queen Elizabeth 1 in 1559 ordered that perambulations of the parish should take place at Rogationtide. Contemporary and subsequent editions of the Prayer Book designated these observations as 'Days of Fasting and Abstinence'.

Such customs have survived more in rural parishes as the beating of the bounds was a way of making sure everyone knew where one parish began and another one ended. This had economic and agricultural consequences as the Parson's glebe and individual landowner's property had to be preserved for their benefit. The Prayers of Rogationtide mainly ask for God's blessing on the lands and on the newly sown crops, praying for seasonable weather, rain and sun as needed for the fruitfulness of the countryside. (Rogationtide coming from the Latin *rogare* meaning to ask). Clergy still in some country parishes today hold open air services at this season and remind us of our dependence on the generosity of God in providing for us the food we require for nourishment and health.

I would not suggest we begin beating the bounds of our parish, our boundaries are rather dangerous for pedestrians as they include the centre of Southern Way, Newport Rd and City Rd. However our prayers will be offered in Church for those who work on the land and we will ask gratefully for our Lord's bountiful gifts of nature. Through all the difficulties of the past year or so we have been fortunate in this country that our food has been produced for us. We have not known the pain of hunger or famine that some of our sisters and brothers in other parts of the world experience daily. We have been given so much which should encourage us to be generous.

This is a vital message for us to receive and share and particularly important as we begin Christian Aid Week. Normally at this time we go around our parishes collecting money from our neighbours, door to door. This year again that is not possible but there will be cash collections in Church, envelopes available for Gift Aided donations and others may give online or send cheques. All our Scripture readings this week (from Acts, the Epistle and Gospel of John) speak of God's love for us, his love for Jesus and how we should love each other. "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." Jesus calls us his friends not his servants and urges us to share that love with all people. Rogationtide recalls the generosity of God providing for our needs, Christian Aid Week calls us to recognise our responsibility and our joyful duty to share in a

tangible way that love and those gifts with all our friends in the human family.

Best wishes and prayers



The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk

Vicar of Roath

**I have spoken to many of you by telephone. If any of you want to chat please
ring
02920 487854 or 07794 157604
It's good to talk!**



Thoughts for the Day

A series of letters from the Reverend Ruth Coombs

March 19 - A Year of Lockdown

23 March 2021 marks the first anniversary of the national Coronavirus lockdown across the UK. It is hoped that this day will be marked by many as a national day of remembrance.

[Marie Curie](#) have produced resources in several languages to help us remember, including resources for schools and young people.

Many people have lost a loved one, or a dear friend. There are few of us who have not been touched by bereavement, but none of us has come this far without some sense of loss or pain or grief. We have lost a year of contact with family, missed hugging our friends, missed seeing our colleagues. We are in the main sociable creatures who need physical contact to thrive.

Some of us may feel that we have been wandering in the wilderness, uprooted from our usual patterns of life, bereft of comfort and unable to connect with our churches and church family. It is somehow fitting that this national day of remembrance is during the solemn season of Lent. In a time of reflection and repentance.

Lent has traditionally been a time of fasting, of giving something up. This year we could all be forgiven for perhaps wondering what else could we give up? Our frontline workers in health, social care, retail, farming, fishing, ministry, have given up selfishness and put the needs of others before themselves. Some have given up retirement and gone back to work to help out. And for some others work has been more frenetic and busier than ever, whilst others have found themselves furloughed for months at a time or have sadly lost their jobs.

Whatever our personal circumstances, we can all pause for a moment to reflect on the past year and what that has meant for us individually and collectively as Christians. I have been using two books to help me to do just that over the past weeks.

The first our Diocesan Lent Book, *Opening Our Lives* by Trystan Owain Hughes, whose daily devotionals are encouraging us to "...look across as well as up", to open our eyes, ears, hearts, ways, actions, and pain to God, and to open our world to God's hope. At times joyful, at times painful, always challenging with each day digging deeper into our inner resources and opening us up to help us let more of God in.

The second a book sent to me by a friend and colleague, who I value greatly even though we have never physically met because they started working with us during lockdown. This book has inspired them through the years and it is also inspiring me. *Say It To God*, by Luigi Gioia was the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2018. A beautiful book that helps with our prayer life, not least by acknowledging that prayer is not always easy, "...we struggle with distractions, anxious thoughts and

commitments". We journey with the writer through prayers from scripture - the psalms, those of Old Testament Prophets and the prayers of Jesus.

Our Lenten journeys this year may be different and difficult, with times of sorrow, grieving and loss. Jesus' own journey to the cross was filled with sorrow, grieving and loss too. Maybe we will look back at this time and reflect on a closer walk with God because of our pain. And maybe looking forward to the joy and glory of Easter this year, will be an extra special moment, filled with the Holy Spirit. As Pope John Paul II reminded us "We do not pretend that life is all beauty. We are aware of darkness and sin, of poverty and pain. But we know Jesus has conquered sin and passed through his own pain to the glory of the Resurrection. And we live in the light of his Paschal Mystery - the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. 'We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!'"

April 4 - Easter Sunday John 20.1 -18

In the Gospel according to St. John, Easter begins dark, "Early on that first day of the week, while it was still dark..." Easter doesn't burst forth with joy and laughter, it has a painful, sorrowful and fearful beginning.

Mary comes to the tomb early in the morning, possible just as the light was beginning to break through enough so she could find her way. John doesn't say why she was coming but it's easy to imagine that she was coming to mourn, to pray, to grieve the loss of her dear friend and saviour. After all Jesus has treated her differently than other men, Mary a sinner.

Jesus gave Mary Magdalene confidence. She, St. John the Evangelist, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary the mother of Jesus were the few who remained faithful and fearless, staying with our Lord even at the foot of the cross (John 19:25, Luke 15:33-40).

Imagine how stricken she must have been when arriving she saw the tomb had been opened, how this would have filled her with fear and despair. Jesus had been tortured and killed and now someone has come and robbed his grave. Mary doesn't dare to enter the tomb, she immediately turns and runs for help.

She goes to Peter and presumably John and tells them the terrible news.

They respond by running to the tomb. Peter is slower than the other disciple who bends down and looks inside. Peter goes in and sees the linen wraps all neatly folded up, and the other disciple plucks up the courage to go in and sees the same and he "believed". But what does he believe? In the next verse we are told they didn't yet understand the scripture that He rose from the dead, so he can't believe that Jesus is risen. Does it mean that he simply believes that something is going on, that it can't be robbers, because why would robbers take the time to unwrap Jesus' body and then leave them neat and tidy at the scene of the crime? And why do the two men then simply go home? Not a single emotion is described. We are not told

they were happy or sad, confused or elated, curious or uninquisitive. Nothing. They just go home. They don't even say good-bye to Mary. They just silently walk away.

Mary stays weeping and then she has the encounter with the angels and then "the gardener" who asks why she is crying. She doesn't recognise Jesus, so here is this stranger coming and asking a woman on her own what's the matter. This is extraordinary behaviour in the time of Jesus, when the conventions were that men did not speak to women they did not know, but Mary in her grief doesn't seem to notice this breach in the rules, she simply tells her story. It's not until Jesus calls her by name that she realises who he is and what has happened, that the joy of Easter breaks through.

Jesus tells her that she cannot hold onto him but he instructs her to tell the disciples that Jesus is, ".ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God". Mary does his bidding telling the disciples, "I have seen the Lord". John uses the word "announced" a dramatic word worthy of the story. Imagine you have something so important to say to your colleagues and superiors and being able to announce it. Where would the emphasis be, on *I* (me), or on **the Lord**? Or even on the word **seen**, "I have **seen** the Lord". Mary has seen the risen Christ, the first person to see him, and yet do people believe her? We know that Thomas did not believe until he had seen Jesus for himself, and there are other encounters where Jesus shows himself to his disciples and only then do they believe.

Why did Jesus choose to reveal himself first to Mary? Why was she authorised by Jesus to preach the good news to the disciples? Perhaps we will never know, but we do know Jesus walked with the weak, the poor, the unloved and the sinner and Mary was seen as a sinner. Mary Magdalene has a special role in the ministry of Jesus. She is the walking embodiment of the forgiving and loving nature of our Lord. A special woman, one who gives us hope that when our lives are dark or despairing, and when we fail and fail again we do it in the sure knowledge of the love of God for each and every one of us. St. Anselm wrote,

"St. Mary Magdalene, you came with springing tears to the spring of mercy, Christ; from Him your burning thirst was abundantly refreshed through Him your sins were forgiven; by Him your bitter sorrow was consoled.

My dearest lady, well you know by your own life how a sinful soul can be reconciled with its Creator, what counsel a soul in misery needs, what medicine will restore the sick to health. It is enough for us to understand, dear friend of God, to whom were many sins forgiven, because she loved much..." Amen

I wish you a joyous and blessed Easter.

April 11th - Easter 2

Thought for the Day John 20:19-31 Thomas

In today's gospel we hear a little about the disciple Thomas. For nearly 2,000 years, Thomas has received a lot of bad press. He was given the name of "Doubting

Thomas". He has been portrayed as a man filled with doubt and fear. But scripture tells us something quite different. Maybe Thomas was a pessimist. Perhaps like some of us he was a "glass half- empty" kind of person. Perhaps he looked for the negative or dark side of every situation first.

But Thomas had some amazing qualities. He was loyal to the Lord. He loved Jesus. He possessed an inquiring mind. He was sceptical, but his scepticism was open to belief.

In our Gospel reading we don't know why the disciples were in the room. We can surmise that they were talking about Jesus, maybe praying, maybe having some kind of service, but we do know that Thomas wasn't with them. We don't know why Thomas wasn't there but the Bible gives us some clues.

In John chapter 11 Jesus is going to raise Lazarus and Thomas knows that Jesus' enemies are after Him and that Jesus might just die. He is willing to go with Jesus and die with him if necessary. Thomas challenged the rest to go along with Jesus.

In John chapter 14 Jesus has told His disciples that He is going away. He also tells the disciples that they know where He is going and they know how to get there themselves. Thomas responds by saying that he needs more information. He wasn't afraid to ask questions, even questions to Jesus. His questions were not motivated by doubt, but by a desire to know more.

These two passages don't show a man who is afraid or doubting, they show a man who is brave and inquisitive. He is loyal to Jesus even to his death. He loves his Lord more than his own life. He would rather die than have to live here without his Lord.

Imagine loving someone so much and then that person dies. How might Thomas have felt when Jesus died on the cross? Thomas' world was torn apart. He may have become despondent, depressed and discouraged. Perhaps he was not with the other disciples by choice. Maybe he was not there because he was broken-hearted, a flood of competing emotions battling for control of the heart and life of Thomas. Perhaps he needed some time alone to come to terms with his grief.

Whatever his reasons were for missing that assembly that day, Thomas missed out such a lot because he was not there. He missed the presence of the Lord, the power of the Lord, the peace of the Lord - that peace which we all seek and need, he missed the praises of the Lord.

Thomas missed a lot when he missed that assembly. Regardless of his excuse for not being there, he missed some things that could never be repeated. Others told him about it, but Thomas learned the hard way that there are some things you just have to see for yourself. We all know what it feels like to miss something and learn about from others. We can never capture the fullness of the experience second or third hand. Something is missing in the fellowship when you are not there.

Thomas was not there when Jesus appeared. The other disciples were and they tell him about all that they had seen when Jesus appeared to them. But Thomas doesn't believe them.

Before we come down too hard on Thomas, we need to think about the other disciples. When they first heard the news that Jesus was alive, they didn't believe either.

Mary Magdalen thought Jesus was the gardener until He called her by name. On the road to Emmaus Jesus wasn't recognised until he said certain things. And in our Gospel reading this morning when Jesus appeared to the disciples and Thomas wasn't there, he showed them his hands and his side. Thomas was only asking for the same proof they had already received.

Thomas' last memory of Jesus is of a dead man hanging on a cross. His world has crumbled around him and doesn't know what lies ahead. Little wonder that he found this all very difficult to understand. But once Thomas saw Jesus and understood, he never doubted again.

During these times of pandemic, when life as we are used to feels very far away and somehow not real. When some of us have lost loved ones and others have lost the constancy of community and church; if we falter or doubt we can look to Thomas for strength and as an example of how we can live our lives as Christians, putting God first and ourselves second. Amen.

April 18 - Easter 3

Thought for the Day Luke 24.36-48

This passage from the gospel according to Luke focuses on Jesus' promise, his promise to the disciples and thus his promise to you and to me. It's quite difficult to centre on these words without putting them into context.

Intriguingly, we are told, "While the eleven and their companions were talking about what they had heard..." Well what had they heard, what have we missed? Looking back to the previous verses from Luke and the gospel according to John we know that they were in the room together in Jerusalem and they were listening to the encounter of Jesus with Cleopas and his companion - possibly his wife Mary - on the road to Emmaus, when Jesus revealed himself to them in the breaking of bread, even though they were not part of the twelve and so not present at the Last Supper.

Imagine being interrupted in the telling of that story by the sudden appearance of a figure, in a room we told by John was locked. The disciples were already hurt, upset and confused. The Emmaus story would add to that confusion. They were also afraid of being caught by the authorities. In middle of all this Jesus appears to them. Understandably they are at first terrified, as I think any one of us might be if someone appeared to us in our locked home. Jesus tries to reassure them by showing them his hands and his sides, they are still confused but then begin to understand, and maybe relax a bit and let the joy of having Jesus back with them overtake their fear.

Then Jesus confuses them again by asking for food. He asks his friends for some dinner. They give him some fish. Is the fish symbolic of Jesus taking fishermen to be

his disciples, or maybe an echo of the feeding of the five thousand? Some commentators, including Augustine do consider that the fish might indicate, for example the faith of the martyrs, but it is not clear.

Perhaps the bigger question is why would Jesus ask for food? Both the Church fathers and more modern day commentators agree that Jesus was showing his disciples that he had resurrected, that he had a real body. John Calvin writes “During the whole course of his life, he had subjected himself to the necessity of eating and drinking; and now, though relieved from that necessity, he eats for the purpose of convincing his disciples of the certainty of his resurrection.”

So how then can this real body that can speak and eat and that the disciples can touch at the same time appear and disappear at will? This is one of the really difficult things to grasp about the resurrection. Resurrection doesn't simply mean life after death, or going to heaven. In the Jewish world of the first century it meant a new **embodied** life in God's new world. It's a different type of body than our original ones, one that will belong in both the dimensions of God's world, heaven and earth, it's a transformed body.

Jesus' body did not need time to decay, he was transformed in three days. We don't know what this transformation will be for us, when or how, but we do know as Christians that it is bound up in sin and the repentance and redemption of sins. Jesus uses his last days on earth to give very practical guidance to the disciples and the mission of the church, guided by scripture. Repentance and redemption are central to that mission. Repentance must go much further than forgiveness of individual sins, and the turning away from sin of each of us individually, important though that is. Repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be our Christian mission, our collective agenda for change in the modern world.

God loves us so much he gave us Jesus to walk amongst, to give us his peace, to offer us redemption and the hope of eternal life. As modern day theological ethics scholar Esther D. Reed puts it, “Redemption does not only release from sin but awakens consciousness of the availability of love which allows persons to be reborn...Thus, redemption is God's work of love to restore and renew all things. It is God's means of abolishing sin and delivering humankind and all creation from the grip of death in various manifestations.”

May God's peace and love be with us all.

April 25th – Easter 4

Thought for the Day For Good Shepherd Sunday John 10: 11-18

The fourth Sunday of Easter is traditionally known as Good Shepherd Sunday, now chosen as Vocations Sunday, when we reflect upon our call to service and ministry and look to others for guidance on discerning that call.

Ministry comes in all shapes and sizes, ordained and predominantly lay. Without lay ministries, those of us with the privilege of serving in ordained ministry would flounder and ultimately fail.

The amazing breadth and depth of ministry has come to the fore during the last year or so, when parishes and ministry areas have sought to stay connected and reach out further into communities. Pastoral care has been the order of the day and there are many examples of people serving God and their fellow humankind in new and often innovative ways. Some of these have been quite simple, but the dedication to sustain them has been awesome. From food and school uniform banks; to the “Res Posties” (Church of the Resurrection, Ely) who post newsletters through the doors of parishioners who are not digitally connected, don’t just drop and go but knock and step back to check on wellbeing; and of course our own much loved Forget-Me-Nots group who still meet regularly over Zoom and have supported and enabled some of the people in our parish in the most vulnerable situations to come together for laughter, entertainment from a plethora of volunteers, and mutual comfort.

So why the “Good Shepherd”? I don’t know if you remember the television programme from some years ago “One Man and His Dog” from the 1970s and 80s, which was revived in 2013. I was fascinated by how the shepherd, (man, woman or sometimes young person) and their dog worked in such tune together to herd sheep into various different pens over complex courses. The dogs, it would seem would do anything the shepherd asked, in turn the shepherd truly loved and could not work without their dog.

The connection between sheep and shepherd is palpable, and one that we can relate to as much as the early Christians could. Sheep are mentioned in the Bible over 500 times, more than any other animal. In Biblical times shepherds led their sheep from the front, leading and guiding them on the way forward, rather than chivvying them up from behind. They looked after them in dangerous conditions, spending months away up in the hills looking for pasture.

So, why are **we** likened to sheep? Well there are many reasons; sheep have no sense of direction, they are defenceless, they can’t get up without help, they recognise the shepherd’s voice, they are not meant to carry burdens, they cannot care for themselves when wounded, they are innocent. Do you recognise yourself in any of those things? I know I do. We even have similar defence mechanisms. When we are worried or afraid we tend to run away, or maybe kick out a bit, the same two defence mechanisms sheep have.

Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away - and the wolf snatches them and scatters them...I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:11 -15 NRSV).

The shepherd does not abandon his or her sheep. They seek out sheep in distress and bring them back to the fold, they stay with them, live with them and know each of them individually. Just like sheep, we have no direction without Jesus, we lack protection on every side, and we were never meant to carry a heavy load. We cannot make it alone without Him. Despite sheep wandering off in all directions, God

made them valuable. They are a symbol of great blessing and prosperity. To be likened to sheep then shows us the value God gives to us.

Jesus is the shepherd that calls us, if we recognise His voice and run towards Him he will lead us to the spring of living waters and take care of us forever. If we allow the Good Shepherd to guide us we will truly know our value as one who is priceless to the Shepherd.

Later in the gospel according to St. John, Peter is told by Jesus to feed His sheep; to tend to their physical, pastoral and spiritual needs. If we listen to Jesus' voice calling us to do His will, just as Peter did, it will help us to discern what he is calling us to do, both as His sheep and as ministers to His flock.

May 2nd – Easter 5

Thought for the Day Easter 5 John 15.1-8

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower'

It's May already and spring is truly here. After the frostiest April on record, let's hope that May will turn out to be similar to last year, when the sun shone and the plants grew and the birds were in abundance in the garden.

I know many of us love our gardens. Working in them gives us a great sense of fulfilment. Sitting down after a day of weeding, digging and planting, perhaps with an ache or pain gives us sense of satisfaction, a job well done. But any of us who are gardeners will know that we can't just do it once, sit back and relax. We need to keep on top of it.

We have a lovely, rather large bush fuchsia and realised the other day that we had forgotten to prune it back in the winter. I'm now rather worried about it because there are lots of what appear to be dead branches but it is also budding up so we don't want to disturb it. So we have old dead wood and new vigour jostling against each other. Only time will tell what that means if and when it flowers later in the year.

I have never tried growing grapes but I have been fortunate that I have been able to visit several vineyards in South Africa where I learnt something of the care and routine needed and the challenges faced. Particularly at higher altitude where the season is shorter, the grapes smaller and the yield lower and yet the quality of the wine is high, with full flavoured reds and very fruity mouth-watering whites.

I also discovered that you cannot "take your eye off the ball" as the resultant harvest can be really badly affected. Wine growers have to be vigilant, they need to harvest at exactly the right time or the wine doesn't mature properly and a year's livelihood can be lost.

It takes many years to develop a vineyard, using much skill and knowledge, patience and fortitude. It is also expensive, so should be seen as a long term investment.

John's gospel reminds us that we need to attend to our spiritual growth, just as the wine grower cuts out the dead wood in the winter and trims the shoots in the spring so that the vine grows strong and true, bearing grapes of fine quality.

If Jesus is the vine and we are the grapes, we don't just want good quality wine we also want plenty of fruit. In verse four "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me" John alludes to the Christians who have already become dry and been removed. We cannot be whole and wholesome without the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the vine He is our central support, it is through Him that we seek and gain our spiritual nourishment. Just as the branches, leaves and grapes get their food and water from the vine stem, so we get ours from Jesus Christ. We are reminded that like the disciples, by abiding in God the Father and God the Son, we are assured of two positive consequences, the efficacy of our prayer and the glorification of the Father.

We are also warned of the dangers of complacency and spiritual self-neglect. Such neglect leads us to wither on the vine like dry grapes, making our contribution dull, lifeless and weak. In our busy lives it is often difficult not to crowd out the quiet times, hard to find the space for inner reflection. However hard we find this it is certainly worth the effort.

In his book, *God Has a Dream*, Desmond Tutu reminds us of the need for stillness, he writes, "Jesus reminds his disciples that they cannot stay basking in the glory of God on the mountaintop. They must go down into the valley of human need. And so must we. But as we work to feed the hungry, we must also remember to draw our own sustenance from our glimpses of God. In all the activity required of us as God's partners, there must also be stillness, for in this stillness we can hear God's voice in our lives and the will of God working in the world."

There are times when we find it hard to stay fresh, alert and vibrant in our approaches to Christian life. The certain knowledge of Jesus' love for me and for you helps me during the hard times.

Lord Jesus teach us to be vigilant, to root out the weeds of sin growing in our hearts. Teach us how to love and to accept your love in all that we do. This week let us all try to remember to demonstrate our faith and spiritual energy by a simple act to someone else. Let us demonstrate Jesus' love in us by reaching out with joy, and in a moment of stillness let us thank the Lord for all our blessings. Amen

EASTER

Easter is the most special day of the Christian Year, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why does the date move around? Because the date of the Jewish Passover moves around and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March/early April.

Sir Isaac Newton was one of the first to use the Hebrew lunar calendar to come up with firm dates for Good Friday: Friday 7th April 30 AD or Friday 3 April 33 AD, with Easter Day falling two days later. Modern scholars continue to think these the most likely.

Most people will tell you that Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, which is broadly true. But the precise calculations are complicated and involve something called an 'ecclesiastical full moon', which is not the same as the moon in the sky. The earliest possible date for Easter in the West is 22nd March, which last fell in 1818 and won't fall again until 2285. The latest is 25th April which last happened in 1943 and is next due in 2038.

Why the name Easter? In almost every European language, the Festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word Easter however seems to come from Eostre, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month', but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses, like Eos and Aurora, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' – a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally why Easter Eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens started laying regularly again each spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter

From April 2010 Benefice News Llantwit Major with thanks

"Clapio Wyau" (Egg Clapping)

Meinwen Ruddock-Jones, 31 March 2020

["Clapio Wyau" \(Egg Clapping\) \(museum.wales\)](http://museum.wales)

Easter Customs This week I have been listening to recordings in the Sound Archive relating to Easter Customs. We have oral testimony on a wide variety of traditions: holding "eisteddfods"; "creu gwely Crist" (creating Christ's bed); singing Easter carols; cutting hair and trimming the beard on Maundy Thursday in order to look tidy for the Easter weekend; eating fish, "hongian bwnen" and walking to church barefooted on Good Friday; drinking water from a well with brown sugar on the Saturday before Easter; climbing a mountain to see the sun "dancing" at daybreak and wearing new clothes on Easter Sunday; playing "cnapan" (a game of Welsh hurling using a ball of hard wood) on the Sunday following Easter.

"Clapio Wyau" ("Egg Clapping") But the custom that really caught my attention was the practice of going "egg clapping" on Anglesey. Going egg clapping before Easter was an extremely popular tradition among children years ago and the images below show the wooden egg clappers that the children would carry with them.

According to Elen Parry who was born in Gaerwen in 1895 and recorded by the Museum in 1965:

We would usually have an hour or two off school, maybe a day or two before the school would close so that we could go clapping before Easter. You would nearly be doing it throughout the week, but there was one special day when the school would let you go clapping for an hour or two. Nearly everybody would go clapping. Your father would have made you what we would call a "clapper". And what was that? A piece of wood with two more pieces either side so that it would "clap", and that's what a "clapper" was.

The children would travel around local farms (or any homestead that kept chickens). They would knock on the door, shake their clappers and recite a short rhyme similar to this one:

Clap, clap, os gwelwch chi'n dda ga'i wŷ *Clap, clap, please may I have an egg*

Geneth fychan (neu fachgen bychan) ar y plwy' *Young girl (or young boy) on the parish*

And here's another version of the rhyme from Huw D. Jones, Gaerwen:

Clep, Clep dau wŷ *Clap, Clap, two eggs*

Bachgen bach ar y plwy' *Young boy on the parish*

The door would be opened and the occupier would ask "And who do you belong to?" After the children had answered, they would each receive an egg. According to Elen Parry:

You would either have a small pitcher, a small can, or a basket with straw or grass on the bottom. And then everybody would get an egg. Well, by the time you'd finished, you might have a basket full of eggs.

The inhabitants of the home would usually recognise the children and if a brother or sister was missing, they would place an extra egg in the basket for siblings. Mary Davies, from Bodorgan, born in 1894 and recorded by the Museum in 1974 recalls:

And if the family in the house knew these small children, knew their siblings, and some were missing, they would also give them an egg for those brothers or sisters.

Revival

It's great to see that the tradition of clapping is now enjoying a revival on Anglesey. It seems, for one week only, it's still safe and acceptable in Wales to put all your eggs in one basket.





NEWS FROM THE LYCHGATE

We hear that part of the boundary wall of St Margaret's fell down, for no reason that could be ascertained. It must be very old as it has been built and maintained for centuries. Some of it is in brick, and some stone. Probably it is, as a boundary, as old as the foundations of the first church on that site, in the tenth century.

Being almost circular, and together with the fact that the church was built in a rise, points to the possibilities that the original church was erected on an old pagan site. So it is good to hear of the boundary wall being repaired in our generation. I am told that it has been very well restored by agents of the council. The squirrels will be safe to run up and down it again.

We are pleased to announce the Golden Wedding of Jenny and Jim Bendon on 24th April. Mark Twain once wrote that only those who have been married for 25 years dare to talk about "true love". How much more true is that of those who have been married for twice that?.

With our vaccinations, and having endured "lockdown" we think we see our way forward to becoming a church congregation again. I would however not have believed that there would be a period of our year, in my lifetime that I have not entered a church. That must be true for many of us. We will all be so pleased to be back in a regular pattern of services which punctuate our lives. Our Vicar Stewart and our Curate Ruth together with others, have done an amazing job in keeping the pattern going during the pandemic. There have been services, prayer and

praise coming from St Margaret's, so that even those of us who were unable to attend were delighted and comforted to know that they were still happening. We were pleased to hear that the choir has returned in a limited form, to raise their voices. Thank you, Gary, for making this happen. I hear that Gary also plays the piano. We do look forward to being able to sing in church once again. Singing hymns in the kitchen isn't quite the same! And whatever has happened to "Songs of Praise"?

News from the Ninian Road Book Giveaway is that it is still going strong. People are contributing books of their own, which adds to the mix. I notice too, that some are returned, having presumably been read. It is endlessly interesting that people continue to contribute to St Margaret's and over £1,000 has now been donated. We are pleased by this unexpected bonus.

We send our thoughts and best wishes to all who are ill, or receiving treatment at this time. This is a pleasure to report, that Gill Day is continuing to improve. She is getting around her flat and looking after herself. It must be hard for such an active lady, but she is doing very well. We send her our love.

A little "off piste" but a nice piece of news, Jeanne Hyett has an aunt who has just celebrated her 104th birthday. Now there's a grand old lady! We send her our best wishes.

Finally, for your delectation a lockdown poem from a parish magazine called The Esthwaite Link, in the Lake District. It will serve to remind us that things are getting better.

Lock-down Poetry – Anon

**I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
I'll sanitize the doorknob and make a cup of tea.**

**I won't go down to the sea again – I won't go out at all.
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from kitchen to the hall.**

There's a green-eyed yellow idol to the north of Katmandu;

But I shan't be seeing him just yet and nor, I think, will you.

**While dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay;
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.**

**I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye,
Nor take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.**

**About the woodland, just right now, I am not free to go,
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow.**

**So no, I won't be travelling much, within the realms of gold,
Or get me to a nunnery – all that's been put on hold.**

**'Give me your hand' I shan't request, albeit we are friends,
Nor come within a mile of you, until this virus ends.**

Sally reports that she and Stephen on the 5th April (Easter Monday) became an auntie and uncle again for the third time due to the fact that Sally's brother Greg and his girlfriend Zoe gave birth to a 6lb 10oz baby boy at the new maternity hospital called The Grange in Cwmbran. We are both anxious and excited as to when we will be able to meet this little bundle of joy that was conceived and born during this pandemic. We have a number of gifts for him from both his doting auntie and uncle. Greg and Zoe have not given him a name yet as they are not able to register the birth until the 5th May. We are extremely over the moon with this little addition to our family.

God Bless and until next time.
Julia & Sally



Duke of Edinburgh (1921-2021)

Stewart Lisk, Vicar of Roath

Jesus said "Peace be with you"

In July 1997 Karen and I were spending our honeymoon on the beautiful Greek Island of Corfu. As well as relaxing and enjoying the sunshine we visited the comparatively modest palace of Mon Repos, formerly a summer residence of the Greek Royal Family. There we discovered it was the birthplace of the baby who was to become Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. In the last few days our media have been full of recollections of the life of service and duty that has come to an end with the death of Prince Philip. His Royal Highness has been so much part of our national life and has travelled the length of the Kingdom and Commonwealth. I am sure that many of us have our own family stories of the Prince. My own father was presented to Prince Philip when he visited his factory in Aberdare during the 1970s. His interest in industry and the working lives of ordinary people was apparent then and in many similar occasions. I first saw him when he came to Llandaff Cathedral with HM the Queen celebrating the Silver Jubilee in 1977. An experience which was mirrored in 2012 when the Royal couple came again to Llandaff for the Diamond Jubilee. On that occasion Lydia and Sophie presented the official welcome bouquet. A magic moment for our family. The girls as they have become teenagers have like so many others enjoyed taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme which has enhanced the lives of millions. Karen and I had already seen the Duke of Edinburgh close up on a beautiful June day in 2010. We had been invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. The gardens were delightful, the music from the military bands was superb and the tea delicious. The abiding memory however we have was the extraordinary energy of the Duke and the Queen as they went about chatting with crowds of invited guests thrilled at the humour and affability of the Prince. The time they spent talking to people and making unforgettable memories will be recalled by countless thousands.

The mystique and majesty of the Royal life has been commented on extensively in the past days but we can also recall that the Duke was a son, brother, grandfather, father and above all a devoted husband. We as members of the family of our nation can sympathise with our beloved Queen and her family at this time of loss for them which will be keenly felt. The monarch herself has like all of us known bereavement and has famously said that grief is the price we pay for love. This is perhaps all the more poignant for her as she recalls more than seventy years of marriage and the love and support they shared in life with all its joys and sorrows. The Queen quoted that well known

evening hymn 'O strength and stay' when describing her consort's constant care and devotion to her.

The Prince was also a deeply thoughtful man and practiced his Christian faith with quiet devotion alongside the Queen not only in large public acts of worship but also in quiet Sundays in the simple churches at Sandringham and Balmoral. Those clergy who preached at services often comment that he would listen carefully and quiz them on their addresses. He also had an awareness of the claims of other world religions and was respectful and sympathetic to people of faith from all nations. His love of the natural world, the animal kingdom and his support of environmental concerns came from his belief in God the creator of the world. The Prince encourages us all to treasure the gift of the earth which is our home. At this Eastertide all of us within the worldwide family of the Church are celebrating the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus. The new life we have in Christ is for living life to the full now but it is also a reminder that we will eventually have the hope for eternal life in God's presence. Jesus words to the disciples was the assurance of peace, a profound sense of wellbeing in the household of faith. A peace we pray will be known by the Royal Family at this time and will be given to Prince Philip and all the faithful departed.

Weekend Word Friday 16th April 2021

Dr Heather Payne Consultant Paediatrician

I read the British Medical Journal every week, and for a number of years now I've started from the back with the obituaries, as the most interesting and stimulating items. I'm often left with the feeling that I'd have liked these strangers if I'd had the chance to meet them. My sense of regret, at a missed opportunity to appreciate a life of impressive achievements often conducted quietly and effectively with little fanfare, reminds me to seek out these gems amongst the living.

I've had this same feeling this past week, discovering much I didn't know about Prince Philip - particularly about his artistic skills, his difficult childhood experiences, and also his personal faith journey - baptised into Orthodox Christianity, finding a home in the Anglican Church... I've wondered if these may have underpinned his commitment to conservation of animals and the planet, and also his support for interfaith and spiritual development, as well as his many other achievements. He's also recognised to have sacrificed personal ambitions to support the Queen as her consort - her 'strength and stay' as she put it, and maybe an early feminist in his support for her.

I know we've all made sacrifices over the past year - everyone has had to give up things. We've missed out on each other's company, missed birthdays, school, socialising and live music, missed smiles, because of having to wear face coverings - also missed great festivals including Easter, Christmas, Eid and other faith and public events. But it's been necessary, as a way to care for other people in the face of this virus. These actions have all made demands on our time, resources, emotions and relationships - but as the word sacrifice literally means 'making sacred' - maybe we can interpret all these experiences as 'giving forward' rather than 'giving up'.

These daily sacrifices that so many have made during the pandemic are crystallised in bereavement. Not being able to gather for a funeral and lean on the support of friends and family to remember and celebrate the loved one, has been additionally painful for so many, and these limits will continue at Windsor Castle for Prince Philip's funeral. That separation reminds me of the desolation of his followers at the death of Jesus, his mother's grief at the foot of his cross, but also that the sacrifice of those earthly relationships were followed by hope in the risen Christ - hope in a new way of life coming out of sacrifice and suffering, in a renewed relationship with the world, that is open to us to accept.

My prayers are already with the Queen and her family. And in an obituary for Prince Philip's life, I can't help but feel this is a moment to pause and remember for a while - but then I'll be trying not to miss an opportunity to be neighbourly and do something to improve the world for those living - perhaps that's the truest tribute to an extraordinary life.



THE BOOK OF JOY – Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

The Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams

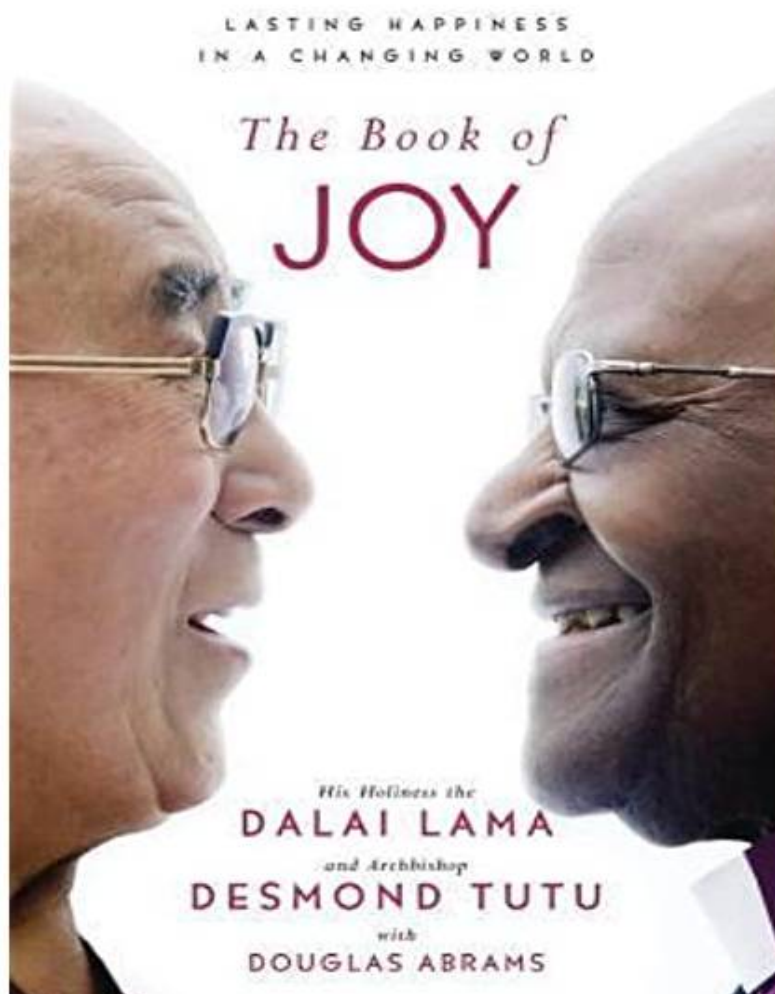
Early on in this inspiring book the Archbishop is quoted as saying that *“Joy is much bigger than happiness. While happiness is often seen as being dependent on external circumstances, Joy is not”*

The week long meeting of two special people in 2015 is rich and rare in its opportunity to share the lessons learned by exile, hardship and oppression. They share the 8 pillars of joy, combining heart and mind, forgiveness, gratitude, compassion, generosity, humility, perspective, humour and acceptance. Their exceptional experiences and the friendship they share gives great insight into the lives of two giants of our time.

Find out more here:

[The Book of Joy Book Summary \(PDF\) by Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu - Two Minute Books](#)

[Doug Abrams On Joy: What He Learned From The Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu | Rich Roll](#)



Copy date for the next magazine (Summer) is 21st June

Please send hard-copy (typed, hand-written or cut-out) to the Parish Office; email contributions to:

Sue Mansell, smmansell@icloud.com

or Gwynn Ellis, rgellis@ntlworld.com, (preferably using Arial font 12)

Then there appeared to them
tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest
on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the

Holy Spirit

Acts 2:4



**For the latest information on Covid Guidance and Church services
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necessarily those of the editors, or the official teachings of the
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