

Services for Holy Week and Easter at St Helena's

Please feel welcome to join us whether for the first time or as a regular congregation member

Palm Sunday (April 1st)

9.30am Holy Eucharist. There will be blessing and procession with palms at this service

Maundy Thursday (April 5th)

10.30am Holy Eucharist
This is the day we recall the Last Supper

Good Friday (April 6th)

A Devotional Service based on the Stations of the Cross. The service begins at 1pm and lasts until 3, but there is opportunity to come and go and to stay for just ten minutes or for the whole two hours. The service will include hymns, prayers, reading and reflection. There will be soup available from 12 noon and throughout the service.

Easter Day (April 8th)

9.30 Holy Communion

We meet for worship at 9.30 every Sunday. Coffee is served in the courtyard after the service. The Church is open during the week for prayer, quiet reflection or, on occasion, special events and services, from 10.30 – 12.30 on Wednesday and Thursday.



St Helena's Larnaca

Pastoral Letter

Easter 2012

Dear Friends

The appetite that people have for dramatic presentations of the Easter story never ceases to amaze me. Hardly a year goes by without some new TV production of The Passion. It is surely remarkable that in this secular age, there are enough people who want to attempt new dramatic interpretations of the events of Holy Week and Easter, and that there is a ready audience for them. That can only be good, but we do have to approach each of them with a little caution. I never saw Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ, being put off, like many others, by the reports of prolonged gratuitous violence that it contained. There is a Hollywood way of portraying evil.

One of the issues that raises for me is that it can lead us to think that evil always reveals itself in spectacular ways. In fact the most insidious evils are the ones that become accepted in our everyday lives. The stories of how whole sections of populations in places like war-time Germany, or more recently Serbia Rwanda or Syria can come to accept evil as acceptable, is often actually a story about ordinary people doing ordinary things, and simply losing sight of their moral compass.

Actually there is also a Hollywood way of portraying the resurrection, and it is worth remembering that that too can lead us to think that resurrection is always spectacular – a special effects kind of thing. In fact that too can be, indeed needs to be, seen within our everyday and ordinary lives where reconciliation happens, where good triumphs over evil and where new life is made possible through sacrifice and care.

The Bible accounts of the Passion and Resurrection are in fact very different from each other. The Passion accounts are easily recognisable from our own news programmes. It's an action story, of political intrigue, of the corruptions of power and clashes of cultures. The Resurrection accounts are very different. They all differ from each other and they have a more poetic or symbolic character as the authors strive to put into words experiences that are hard to describe. These are not descriptions of actions

so much as ways of trying to interpret changes in the lives of the characters.

That points us to a problem of which we are all aware. There isn't enough good news on our TVs and in our newspapers. One of the reasons for that is that bad news concerns actions and is reportable easily and with pictures. Good news is often about processes – healing, loving, nurturing, negotiating, building. These take a long time, are much less immediate and are difficult to picture. As Christians, at Easter we are made aware anew of our need to have the patience to await that kind of good news, life changing resurrection, and not simply to settle for a Hollywood version.

Within our diocese at present there are many examples of where resurrection processes need to take place. The structures of civilisation in Iraq can be quickly and brutally dismantled in months, for example, and that dismantling is easily pictured in scenes of shock and awe. But the rebuilding process will take many years as new trust has to be built, new relationships forged and forgiveness made real. On our own island we see the huge difficulty of overcoming the effects of events of forty years ago that provided pictures for just a few weeks. It would be an optimistic person indeed who saw an early overcoming of what has already taken so long. It is also clear that overcoming a crisis does not mean going back to how things were before it happened. A new situation has to be lived with and adjusted to. That is what we see in the New Testament as the faithful come to terms with learning new things about God.

But that is not an invitation to pessimism. It can be an exciting thing, undertaken in faith. There is indeed much good news in the church and the world. And most of it is to be found in the lives and everyday activities of ordinary people. May it be so for us.

Sue joins me in wishing you all a Happy Easter

John Holdsworth Chaplain