

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 13)

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

Wednesday in Holy Week (April 16)

The Church will be open for private prayer from 10.30 –12

Maundy Thursday (April 17)

A Tenebrae service starting at 6pm. This service is of readings accompanied by the gradual extinguishing of lights. Tenebrae means 'shadows.' A similar service is celebrated in Orthodox Churches on Good (Great) Friday morning.

Good Friday (April 18)

A Devotional Service based on the Stations of the Cross. The service begins at 1.30 pm and lasts until 3, but there is opportunity to come and go and to stay for just ten minutes or for the whole time. The service will include hymns, prayers, reading and reflection.

Easter Day (April 20)

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.



St Helena's Church Larnaca
Pastoral Letter
Passiontide and Easter 2014

Dear Friends

It comes as a surprise to those who arrive in Cyprus from the UK, that Easter should have such a high profile here. All the celebrations we associate, in the UK, with Christmas – the midnight services, the special family rituals – are here instead to be found at Easter. In a sense, that is more correct theologically. Christianity began at Easter. The first specifically Christian writings were accounts of Jesus' passion, crucifixion and resurrection. It was only later, as Gospels came to be written, and the early Church's life developed, that traditions about the birth of Jesus made their appearance. But the point they were making was essentially the same. It was a point about incarnation - about God becoming fully human - with all the implications that carries.

At Easter, the squalor of the stable, the indifference of the innkeeper, the cruelty of Herod, and the wonder of the shepherds, are all developed and re-stated. We have the indifference of the vascillating crowds, the political machinations of Herod and Pilate, the squalor and degradation of the scourging and crucifixion itself. And alongside all that we have the wonder of the Centurion who can say: surely this was a son of God. God has become a fully human adult. The hopes that accompany any human birth have been dulled by experience and immersion in the business of adult life, but they are replaced by a new and overwhelming hope: that humankind is not lost but found; not irreparable but healable; not destined to corruption and evil, but redeemable through love.

This whole theme is well summed up in a seventeenth century poem by the Anglo-Welsh poet Henry Vaughan,

To put on clouds instead of light
And clothe the morning star with dust
Was a translation of such height
As but in thee was ne'er expressed.

Ah, my dear Lord what could'st thou spy
In this impure rebellious clay
That made thee thus resolve to die
For those that kill thee every day?

Oh what strange wonders could thee move
To slight thy precious blood and breath
Sure it was love my Lord, for love
Is only stronger far than death.

Vaughan is trying to come to terms with faith's belief that God became human suffered and died for us. To echo a modern advertising slogan – that we were so worth it.. And yet, is it not our experience that that is how love works, and that relationships are the most lasting when each thinks the other is so worth it.

We do not live in a dream world or a virtual world. We are not cushioned within ecclesiastical or academic ivory towers. What we simply want to know is that God knows us, cares for us and loves us, and that is what Easter as well as Christmas declares. Surely that is sufficient cause for celebration.

Sue, Sean Cathy and our families join in wishing you a blessed Easter.

John Holdsworth Parish priest / Chaplain