

The Parish of Christchurch

The Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Christchurch
St George, Jumpers • St John at Purewell



Associate Priest: The Reverend Richard Partridge,
T 07903 252230 E richardpartridge310@btinternet.com

Sunday 28th March 2021

Dear Friends

The May Day bank holiday weekend in 1990 will remain in my mind for as long as I live. As a young policeman I had been rostered to be part of the policing team for the Bournemouth against Leeds football match. Arriving at the ground on that sunny afternoon I was met with public disorder on a scale that I had never witnessed before, or thankfully since. I can recall many details of that horrific day but what I remember most clearly of all is just how scared I felt as the opposing elements of the crowd faced up to each other and to the police at more and more locations across the local area. As I watched images of the disorder in Bristol last weekend and the pictures of fireworks and other missiles being thrown directly at the serving police officers in that City, those memories came back to the front of my mind and I knew instinctively just how frightening it must have been for those young police officers, and also for the vast majority of the assembled crowd who had no intention of acting with violence and simply wanted to protest peacefully.

Crowds of people when gathered together can serve as a pressure group for bringing about positive change, that after all is the intended aim of peaceful protest, but as we all surely know, it only takes a few people, a few people with an ulterior motive, acting in a somewhat provocative manner, to turn the headlines away from the intended good and into a direction that results in violence, danger and physical injury.

As we enter into this most Holy of weeks within our Church year I have decided that this year I want to imagine what it must have been like to be a part of the Jerusalem crowd that was present at the events that led directly to our Lord's Passion. I am quite sure that I will have no problem at all in joining the euphoria present on Palm Sunday as the promised Messiah rides triumphantly along the roads leading to the city centre as crowds shout and sing "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel." (John 12. verse 13.) But just how hard will it be to stand in the front row of that same crowd as the call or instruction to shout now turns to "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." Of course it will be safer to just try and withdraw from the highly stirred up and volatile mass of people, safer yes, but probably impossible as my actions will be noticed by others and I might become their next target. So there are just two options left, just go with the flow and join in the chants and their demands or do the unthinkable, the ridiculous, the suicidal course of action and turn and face the crowd and shout, "No, this man is the Saviour of the world, the prince of peace and the very Son of God."

Well we all know which course of action that we would like to see ourselves following, but at the same time we are fully aware of our own weaknesses and shortcomings. They are identical in character and nature to those first followers of Jesus who faced the same dilemmas in the hours before Jesus' death. The shame that they must have felt then and there with their choices must have lived with them for the rest of their earthly lives.

Discipleship, true discipleship that is always comes at a personal cost, most things we value in life do likewise. We will almost certainly fail the test of being a follower of Jesus and of doing the right thing from

time to time, and even perhaps on a regular basis. But that is not a reason to give up or to turn back or even to despair. Look at what the post resurrection lives of those first followers of Jesus went on to look like and in the same way what they collectively achieved and grew into. And neither is it a reason to try and “bypass” Holy Week itself, knowing as it were that it will be costly and painful to follow in the footsteps that Jesus himself was forced to take. As we walk with Jesus we become more like him, we gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of just why God chose to send his only Son into the world and we will also hopefully gain the inner peace and strength by knowing and feeling the true joy that always flows from doing the right thing and of following the right path, or put another way, of being a disciple of Christ today.

May I wish you a Blessed Holy Week as we travel together in discipleship and a joyous, peaceful and Holy Easter.

With my love and my Prayers

Richard.

Palm crosses will be available at the west end of the Priory if you would like to collect one.

Church Services in the Parish.

Holy Week.

Please note that the Taize Service on Tuesday and the Maundy Thursday Eucharist are pre-recorded and will be available to view via the website in the usual way. The Service on Good Friday between 2pm and 3pm is being held live in the Priory, you are very welcome to attend this and no tickets are required. The Priory will also be open for private prayer from 10.00am on Good Friday.

It remains our intention to resume regular public services in The Priory and at St George's from Easter Sunday, 4th April. The 9.30am and 11.30am Eucharist Services in the Priory will be ticketed. Free tickets are still available online via the Service/Events page on this website, or by e-mailing boxoffice@christchurchpriory.org or phoning on 01425 278862. If requesting tickets by e-mail, please include a telephone number for track & trace purposes. You do not need a ticket to attend Said Evensong (BCP) at 6.30pm on Sundays nor the Eucharist at St George's on a Sunday at 9.30m. Please note that from Sunday 11th April the Eucharist in the Priory will be at 10.00am once again.

The Wednesday 11.00am (Common Worship) and Thursday (BCP) 11.00am Eucharist Services in the Priory will resume on Wednesday 7th and Thursday 8th April. The St George's Thursday Eucharist at 10.00am (Common Worship) will also resume from 8th April.

Electoral Roll. Robert Phillipson, Parish of Christchurch Electoral Roll Officer, writes Notice is hereby given that the Ecclesiastical Parish of Christchurch Electoral Roll is being REVISED. Any person whose name is NOT ALREADY on the Electoral Roll needs to fill out a form,

- or if you have changed your address since this time last year,
- or if you know of anybody whose name is on the Roll but who has either died,
- or have moved during the year.

When filled out, please return the form to me either by email electoralroll@christchurchpriory.org , via the Priory Vestry, or directly by the 18th April 2021 at the latest. Failure to have your name on our Electoral Roll will mean you will be unable to vote at the Parish AGM, stand for a member of the PCC, Deanery Synod or Churchwarden. In line with the Diocese, you are being asked to provide telephone numbers and an email address (if you have one). This extra information will make it much easier for the clergy to make contact should the need arise, as they use the Electoral Roll as a means of identifying and communicating with members of their congregation. It is, therefore, essential that the Roll is kept up to date.