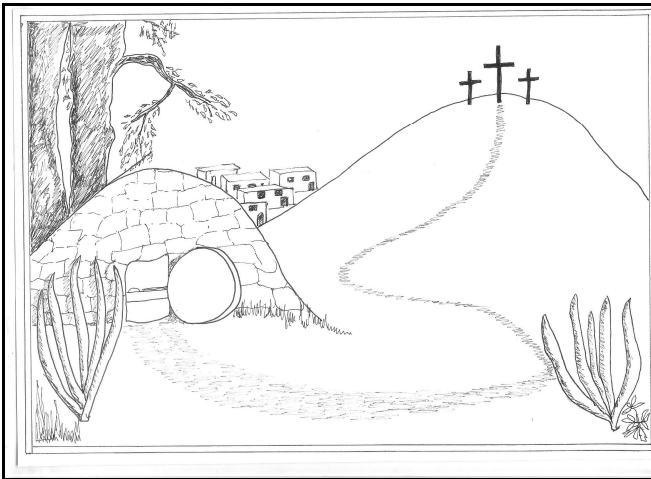


All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

The Easter Experience

What was your Easter like?



Festival days can be great times for some but miserable days for others. Reading the resurrection stories in the gospels we find that similar experience too. The resurrection stories contain a mixture of ecstasy and despondency, an intermingling of delight and discouragement. Just as news of Christ's resurrection caused an explosion of joy among some believers, others were afraid and some doubted. Two downcast disciples even headed toward Emmaus to forget the whole matter.

What about you? Maybe you were in a service and you saw the joy around you but did not sense any joy within you. Perhaps you heard Alleluias resound but realised they found no resonance in your heart. Maybe you listened to the reading of the resurrection stories failing to find their meaning for your life.

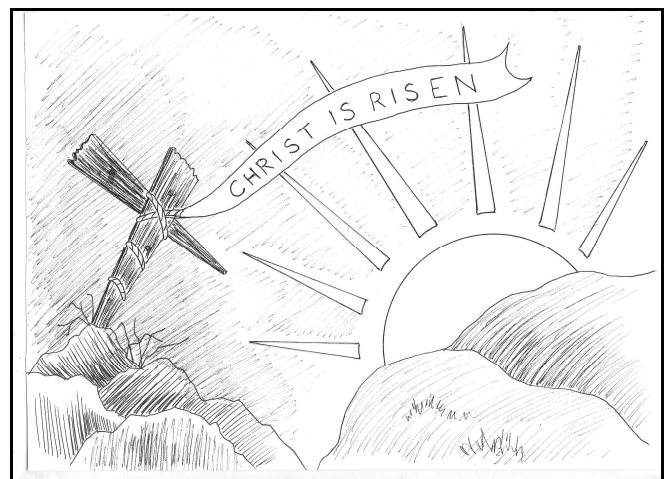
The Gospels do not demand that we understand Christ; rather, they offer the insight that Christ understands us. We do not have to understand Easter to experience Easter.



Christ does not shy away from chaos and conflict. He taught us to pray and yet accepts people who are so troubled that they can't pray. He offers salvation and identifies with people confounded by feelings of lostness. He offers encouragement and knows better than any other the depths of discouragement.

The presence of Christ among us does not depend upon the quality of our understanding of Christ. Christ appears in the midst of people not even looking for him.

Jesus appeared to a woman who intended to anoint his dead body. Jesus appeared to two despondent travellers worn out because of their grief. None of the resurrection appearances of Jesus were marked by dramatic settings or regal greetings. Jesus was mistaken for a gardener. He showed up on a dusty road. He walked along a shoreline watching his disciples fish.



Jesus appears in the ordinary places. Christ comes to our world, to us; at meal times, in fun times, amid our work, and in the face of our worries. Jesus comes to people of faith and to individuals plagued by doubts. He comes in hospital rooms, offices, wherever

we are. He brings hope to those in despair, peace and assurance to the anxious.

Jesus commissioned to ministry every person to whom he appeared as the risen Christ. Sharing the gospel and caring for people are vital to being a Christian and understanding where others are coming from too, as they too may well be wondering, doubting, anxious or in have trouble in their life.

Today, right now, the risen Christ waits to greet us and welcome us into his presence.

Love Jo

Letter from Nick Sharp

Dear friends,

It's good to be back after my sabbatical break. I've enjoyed the privilege of time to rest and be refreshed, to step off the treadmill of regular work, and have time to think, pray and reflect. But I'm glad it's over! I've missed friends and the challenges of ministry, so I'm happy to be back in the saddle.

I want to share a little of my sabbatical thinking with you over the next few months, so there will be a series of articles exploring the "brave new world" of the internet, and especially its impact on young people. Here's a very brief summary of what I've learnt.

The internet is bringing some surprising changes, many of them good, some of them potentially dangerous. In a generation's time, we will largely have acclimatised, and made the adjustment to the new. In between, we just need to be a little bit careful.

The internet is evolving into a vast social network, connecting people all over the planet into something that one day could resemble a global brain. If you've got relatives who live abroad, perhaps you use Skype or something similar to keep in touch. It's wonderful to be able to talk to people in a way that used to be the preserve of science fiction.

But as well as making connections, the internet is affecting identities. We all need to take steps to ensure our identity is not stolen

online, and because it is so easy to create an online identity, it is hard to really know who you are talking to, even if you think you are seeing their face.

For some, the pleasures of the internet are proving addictive, crowding out the real world in favour of a virtual one. Should we be worried?

Perhaps. It is people whose real lives are in some way impoverished, perhaps emotionally or spiritually, who are most likely to take refuge online, and also most at risk from attractive-sounding and -looking predators. The best defence is to build up our real life relationships, and our spiritual lives. The ordinary, everyday work of the church, fellowship, service and spiritual growth has never been more important.

Ascension Day Thursday 13th May

We will be hosting a Choral Communion for the Hertford Team here at All Saints at 8:00 p.m. Do join us to mark this important day in the Church Year.

My daughter, aged eight, attended the Parish Communion. She watched the bread and wine being prepared with great interest. When the congregation left their seats to receive the sacrament she whispered: "Do you think it would be alright if I joined in with the commotion?"

SUNDAY SERVICES
9.30am Matins
10.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evensong

