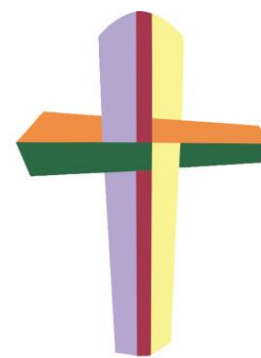


Easter Day 2020



KIDDERMINSTER EAST PARISH
Five Churches One Parish One Lord

Dear all,

It has been an Easter like no other.

A few short months ago as the bells of Big Ben chimed at midnight on 31st December 2019 to usher in 2020 could any of us ever have believed that by the middle of March we would be in such an unprecedented global crisis? “Next year all our troubles would be out of sight” (or so we sang at the time!) and 2020 would be a year just like any other with its quirky mixture of ups and downs, joys and sorrows, laughter and tears. And yet looking forward to December 2020 when it comes to reviewing this year, there will really only be one subject that will be reflected upon and analysed from all sorts of perspectives.

But of course we are no longer in the Christmas season, we are now celebrating Easter and perhaps this year people might be forgiven for wondering what there is to celebrate.

And yet even (or perhaps especially) in this current situation we can still look back to that very first Easter Day, to the followers of Jesus who felt so totally and utterly isolated now that their master was no more, to those who didn't know what the future held for them and contemplating if there would be even more bad times ahead, to a situation that looked as if evil had finally triumphed and that God had distanced Himself more than ever from His people.

And then suddenly in the first light of dawn from beside an empty tomb on that first Easter morning the message was delivered to a group of sorrowful, frightened, vulnerable people, a message that wonderfully, amazingly burst forth and is still the same message even in broken, bedraggled, hurting, vulnerable 2020 as it has always been:

“He is not here, he is risen!”

And risen He still is. What he did for us on that first Easter hasn't in any way been nullified by anything that has happened to us in the last three months.

Later on in the Gospel story Jesus says to His bewildered disciples:

“I am with you always even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28 v 20)

Notice if you will what Jesus *doesn't* say, He doesn't say “ I will be with you *only* in the good times or *only* in the sunny times or *only* in the times when you can stand closer than 2 metres to your neighbour or *only* when you can still worship in your church buildings!” “Always” means always and so we can take His promise on our selves and hold to the truth that He is with us even in the most difficult of circumstances.

And that is what we believe in our current situation. In the darkness His clear message of love still shines out if only we will have the eyes to see it.

A few days ago I was reading a book of poetry and I found myself reading the following poem. You probably all know it although it is best known as a song. For me it spoke afresh of God's care for His creation and that includes us. I offer it for reflection and prayer at this time.

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dew fall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass

Mine is the sunlight
Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day

May the resurrected Christ be with us all this Easter and in the days ahead.

God bless.

Robert
Team Vicar