

St Peter's, Mount Park Road, Ealing
Sunday 5th April 2015
Easter Day – Parish Mass

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

Alleluia! Christ is risen (He is risen indeed. Alleluia!)
do this a couple of times to get the congregation replying with gusto.

We British are so poor in public enthusiasm aren't we? Here is the greatest day of the year. All that preparation, six months of it, have come to fruition. "Six months?" I hear you query. Certainly, well, depending on how you count the time it could be five. And it has been a schlep.

It starts way back in October with Harvest. We start all nice and fresh after a pleasant summer and then it begins. The slog! Harvest then Remembrance, then Christ the King and confirmations, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, quick breather for a couple of weeks of Sundays in Ordinary time then right back in to Lent, Holy Week and finally Easter. But it is worth it. And through all that we have been telling the story of Jesus. We've talked about creation and destruction; the Kingship of Jesus; Jesus's coming again and then the Christmas story. We have heard how he grew and taught and was baptised. We prepared ourselves for the discipline of discipleship through Lent and then turned toward the end of the story, ultimately to Jesus' crucifixion. We have been through the whole thing with him. And now we are here.

The funny thing about Jesus' story is that the end, this bit is constantly reflected in and throughout his story from the very beginning. I know we already know what is going to happen. But if it were not for today the rest of the story would be pointless. What would Jesus have been if this end game, the resurrection hadn't happened? A good guy, a holy prophet, a sad unfortunate misfit? Certainly not the saviour of the world.

This is what makes him different and then gives a completely different take on his story. What words can't do is give that sense of awe and wonder that Jesus' resurrection requires. We do have to actually stop and think about it and when we do, it is something within us we feel or we don't. But the whole pattern; the whole journey of the liturgical year brings us to this resounding

crescendo when the salvation of the world, the forgiveness of you and me is proclaimed by God in the Risen Christ. That's what today is all about.

It is about our forgiveness and God's love for us. In raising Jesus from the dead he is telling us he has forgiven us. Our brokenness is healed. We are no longer lost or alone. The confusion of life melts away in the presence of this fabulous fact. God loves us and forgives us.

But there is more to it than that. Not only does God forgive us he wants us to forgive ourselves. We all carry private crosses. Things we wish we had said or done or indeed not done. God says forgive yourselves because I have forgiven you. This resurrection is a new beginning for everyone. All you have to do is take Jesus for your own, in your heart as well as in your mind.

Today we receive chocolate eggs and cards with Easter bunnies on. This isn't just being cute. This is about the new birth God calls us all to. Both are symbols of new birth, of a new beginning, a new creation. Today we can all begin life a fresh, with God wiping our slate clean. We like Jesus can be drawn from the tomb, resurrected from our old lives into new existences where God is at the centre, where God is allowed to be the power in our lives.

Today Satan, whatever Satan means for you is destroyed, there is no power over you anymore. The gates of Death have been destroyed by Jesus and we are free.

All of this we celebrate today. If you do nothing else give thanks to God for this great gift and receive him into your hearts, take the resurrection of Jesus to yourself a new today.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed Alleluia!