

St Peter's Ealing
Thursday 6th April 2023
Maundy Thursday

It's all in the story

The other week I was explaining what I see as the power and wonder of liturgical worship. There is a danger in seeing liturgical worship as purely a structure upon which to hang readings and prayers, a hymn prayer sandwich if you like, or just as a means of getting from one form of worship – the ministry of the word say – and the next – the minatory of the sacrament. Liturgy should be and is far more than that. Done well liturgy should tell a story. For Christians liturgy should tell the story of salvation and as the story of salvation has many facets so the variety of liturgy should reflect that.

This is drawn into sharp focus this week, as Holy Week is flooded with liturgy. The aim of this flood is to unpack the story of Holy Week and Easter. We begin on Palm Sunday with processions and the blessing of palm crosses. Through Monday to Wednesday, using different means and liturgies we have steadily focused on the salvation story – we have prayed, and walked and reflected and stopped.

Today we wash feet remembering how the Saviour of the world humbled himself and served us through his disciples, calling us to serve others as he served us. tomorrow, as we walk the streets of Ealing in the morning and pray in front of the cross of the crucifixion we place ourselves in the dust hill where the saviour of the world hung and died. The on Sunday we celebrate the great festival when the Christ rises from the tomb, declaring God's healing love for all creation. Our liturgy will help us journey through this great story of salvation helping us explore what the greatest story ever told holds for us.

Through all this stands a constant thread. Jesus gave of himself to us in a meal. He gathered his disciples, as they marked the freedom of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt in the Passover meal. He took bread, he broke it and gave it to each telling them, "This is my body, broken for you." He took a cup of wine and gave it to them to share telling them, "This is my blood, poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." He gave them a meal of love to be shared as his

presence amongst them always. The bread and wine, this common meal, stands at the centre of our story. In this meal Christ stands at the centre of our lives, at the centre of our worship.

The Triduum, the Three Holy Days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day are definitely dramatic. They tell the story of the salvation of the world in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They remind us of what God has done and continues to do for us in God's Son Jesus Christ. And we are reminded that this is our story too. We are part of this story that continues to unfold around us, drawing us closer and closer to God. As we break bread together and travel through this story may the real presence of Christ be born afresh in your hearts.