

AD CLERUM - MAY 2010

Dear People of God

Since the wonderful drama of the lighting of the Easter Candle we have begun each Eucharist with the words,

“Alleluia, Christ is risen ...
He is risen indeed, Alleluia.”

Powerful words – words that have echoed again and again in churches throughout the centuries – but what do they really mean to us and to the people of God whom we serve? I think that all too often it just a liturgical phrase we mouth and subscribe to (like the creeds), but one that has little meaning or reality in our lives.

As it stands, at the start of our liturgy, it is a cry of joyous excitement that takes us back to the events of that first Easter Day the disciples saw their Lord in a way that transformed their lives and made everything forever different. It is about seeing with the eyes of faith and is therefore a cry of triumph; a declaration to the world that, despite any appearances to the contrary in the daily event of our lives, Christ is risen and that Christ is King.

The resurrection appearances recorded by St John which have been the lectionary readings over the past few weeks all speak into this new way of seeing with the eyes of faith. The relationship of ‘seeing’ and ‘believing’ is a theme that runs throughout John’s gospel. All of Jesus’ great signs as recorded by John are linked to ‘seeing’ and people’s response to what they see, and it is significant that the theme of ‘seeing’ features prominently in John’s account of the resurrection appearances.

Of the women who came to the tomb early that Easter morning only Mary Magdeline is named. She ‘sees’ only an empty tomb and runs to tell Peter and John that someone has taken the body. They in turn run to the tomb. Peter, like Mary, also ‘sees’ only the empty tomb. It is John who on entering ‘sees’ and ‘believes,’ perhaps for the first time, that Jesus truly is the Christ. “I was blind, but now I see.” “Alleluia, Christ is risen ...He is risen indeed, Alleluia.”

Later Mary ‘sees’ angels where the body lay (the only other reference to angels in John’s gospel is when Jesus tells Nathaniel “and I saw heaven open”, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man”). She even fails to see Jesus, mistaking him for the gardener. It is only when Jesus calls her by name that she ‘sees’ – the word “rabboni” means teacher, but it is a word that is used almost exclusively in addressing God. And now Mary is able to go again to the disciples; this time to say, “I have seen the Lord.” “I was blind, but now I see.” “Alleluia, Christ is risen ...He is risen indeed, Alleluia.”

The next two appearances are mirror images of each other and are clearly set in the context of the eucharist. Both are about ‘seeing.’ At the end of the first the disciples tell Thomas who had not been present, “We have seen the Lord.” At the end of the second Thomas,

having 'seen' falls on his knees and cries out, "My Lord and my God." "I was blind, but now I see." "Alleluia, Christ is risen ...He is risen indeed, Alleluia."

I think that this sense of 'seeing' with the eyes of faith gives a deeper meaning to the words used at the exchange of peace during Easter: "The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were their hearts glad when they saw the Lord."

In setting the appearances to the disciples in the context of the eucharist (and which some scholars believe was the original ending of the gospel) John is saying something profound to us about the nature of eucharist. The eucharist is always a moment of grace; an encounter with the risen Lord no different from that of those first resurrection appearances. The Lord is present as "two or three gather in his name" in worship just as he was on that first Easter evening. He is present not as one who can pass through locked doors and appear or disappear at will, but as the one who, true to his promise, is with us always. (I think that this is, at least in part, what John is telling us in the resurrection appearance of Chapter 21).

But John goes further: he links resurrection the gift of the Holy Spirit through which we become a new creation. "He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'." The word "breathed" used here is the same word as used in the Septuagint to translate Genesis 2:7 – the Spirit we receive is a new creation; resurrection life. And John may well be linking the gift of the Holy Spirit with the eucharist because the word he uses for 'receive' is the same word translated 'take' used by the Synoptics in the Last Supper and the institution of the eucharist.

In other words, St John presents the eucharist as a sacred space in which we meet the risen Lord in an encounter that changes us for it is always an act of new creation. That is why the eucharist is not an optional or occasional extra in the life of faith, but is the means by which the resurrection life given in baptism is nurtured and sustained. "Send us out in the power of the Holy Spirit to live and work to your glory" is possible only for those whose lives are transformed by worship.

This has, I believe, enormous implications for our worship. If it is to be a holy place of encounter, we need through our preaching and teaching to create a level of expectancy in the hearts and minds of those who come to worship. Worship is not simply a gathering of the faithful for fellowship, but a place of meeting with the risen Lord. We should be gathering in eager anticipation and should leave knowing that we have met with the Lord in a sacred space in which holy things have happened and our lives forever changed. If our worship is not life changing, it is not truly worship. "I was blind, but now I see." "Alleluia, Christ is risen ...He is risen indeed, Alleluia."

For self reflection:

1. How do I prepare myself for worship? Do I come to the eucharist in eager anticipation and leave eager to build God's kingdom in the power of the Holy Spirit? Speak to God about your answers to these questions.
2. Does my life proclaim resurrection life? How does the power of the Holy Spirit manifest itself in my daily life? To what extent is my life one that is lived in the service of God?

For group discussion:

1. How can we help people better prepare themselves for worship and build a greater level of expectancy amongst ourselves?
2. What changes do we need to make in the planning and conducting of our worship services that will enhance the quality of worship so that our people leave knowing

that they have been in the presence of the risen Lord and that their lives have been refreshed, empowered and transformed?

May we all 'see' the Lord and be made new,



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Parish Council Training Workshops

The next Parish Council Training Workshops will take place on Saturday the 8th of May at St John the Divine, Randfontein and on Saturday the 15th of May at St Joseph Diocesan Centre. Tea will be served from 08h30. The training starts at 09h00 and is expected to be finished by 12h00. Please contact Ivy Matthews in the Diocesan Office with names of persons attending from your parish and the day they will be attending. This is to facilitate handouts and catering. Ivy can be contacted on 011 336 8724 or by e-mail on ivy.matthews@anglicanjoburg.org.za

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: The next Clergy Day will take place on the 4th of May at St Joseph's. Rod Charlton will be spending the morning with us to discuss how we as clergy need to ensure that we spend time nurturing and caring for ourselves.

Retreats: St Benedict's, Rosettenville, are offering the following two weekend retreats during May (open to both clergy and laity):-

7-9 May:

6 Lessons for Busy people from the Life of Christ:

Conductor: Dr Maria Frahm-Arp

28-30 May

David and Jesus, Kings in Israel: What kind of leaders are we?

Conductor: Bishop Duncan Buchanan

Both retreats are led by gifted retreat conductors from this diocese well known to all of us. I can recommend both retreats unreservedly. It would be a wonderful time of refreshment for those of you who are not on duty that weekend, and well worth recommending to your churchwardens, parish councillors, and parish ministers (all of whom should be making at least one week-end retreat a year. Book through St Benedicts.

Centre for Christian Spirituality: CCS is in the process of being de-registered as an independent Faith Based Non-Profit Voluntary Association so that the ministry can be absorbed into the Spiritual Formation Portfolio of the Diocese of Johannesburg. The prospect of expanding CCS's work is thereby expanded and legitimised by its inclusion in the wider ministry of the church. In brief, the purpose of CCS is to nurture and encourage ministry and formation in Christian spirituality and mysticism. Please read the attached

documents to find out more about CCS, their objectives and their April and May program.

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Reading Recommendations

Tim Long has recommended the following books this month:-

Long, Thomas G., 2009. **Accompany Them With Singing – The Christian Funeral**. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. This is a superb resource, particularly in offering rich theological reflection on why the body should be present at funerals. It is also very helpful on other tricky issues with regard to funerals (how many testimonies should be allowed; preaching, music etc.). A really useful and thought-provoking book.

Jones, Gregory L. 1995. **Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans. Jones argues that the church has lost a theological grasp of the meaning and practice of forgiveness by capitulating to a secular, therapeutic understanding which is similar enough in conceptualization to be mistaken for what the church ought to be teaching and practising. It's a very thought-provoking study.

Taylor, Nicholas N. 2009. **Lay Presidency at the Eucharist: An Anglican Approach**. London: Mowbray. While I don't think the issue of lay presidency is of much interest here Taylor's study will give readers a balanced and widely-researched historical and theological grasp of the meaning of ordination and some thought-provoking stuff on the nature of and relationship between clergy and laity.

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Provincial News

- The Archbishop has asked me to let you know that at the Elective Assembly held on the 20th of April, Archdeacon **Daniel Kgomoso** was elected as the next bishop of the Diocese of Mpumalanga. Please pray for him, his wife and family, as he prepares for this new calling.
- Please continue to pray for **Bishop Joseph Tsubella**, Assistant Bishop of Diocese of Highveld who is seriously ill with cancer of the liver.
- Please pray for **Bishop Mark van Koevering**, Bishop of Niassa who is still recovering from pneumonia and a kidney infection assumed to be as a result of kidney stones. He will be travelling to South Africa to undergo medical tests when he is strong enough.
- **John Ruston OGB**, one-time Bishop-Suffragan Bishop of Pretoria and Bishop of St Helena from 1991 to 1999, died on 27th April in Horsham, England. He had been ill and frail for some time. We give thanks to God for his ministry in this Province. May he rest in peace, and rise in glory.

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Diocesan Family News

- **John and Amy Herbert** will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on 28th May. We congratulate them on reaching this important milestone and for their witness to Christian marriage in their community.
- **Doug Wessels** is now out of hospital and will be undergoing a course of radiation therapy. Please keep him, Lyn and their family in your prayers.
- **Martin Louw's** mother, Ramona, will be undergoing surgery for a tumour on 6th May. Please remember her, Martin and the family in your prayers at this time.

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Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

Please remember the following persons in your prayers as they celebrate birthdays and anniversaries this month:

MAY BIRTHDAYS:

Wishing you a blessed Birthday!

5 th	Gerard Sharp	22 th	Margaret Steward
6 th	Makhosi Lenkoe	23 th	Pearl Makgohlane
6 th	Rob Hofmeyer	24 th	Charles May
8 th	Andrew Phillips	25 th	Nosipho Matubatuba
8 th	Sue Ray	27 th	Dolly Lethoko
12 th	Motlale Namu	27 th	Yvonne Payne
13 th	Maureen Rowland-Aitken	28 th	Ntombi Molefe
17 th	Corney Mphaki	28 th	Tsepo Matubatuba
19 th	Vicky Moroa	30 th	Millie Smyth
20 th	Gwyn Slade		

MAY ANNIVERSARIES:

“Our wedding was many years ago. The celebration continues to this day”
Gene Perret

28 th	Mlanjeni & Nokwezi Dodo (32yrs)	28 th	John & Amy Herbert(50yrs)
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JUNE BIRTHDAYS:

May God continue to bless your life and give you the desires of your heart!

1 st	Thato Molipa	8 th	Diana Keartland
3 rd	Ian Macintosh	9 th	Fred Robb
3 rd	Diana Thorburn	11 th	Maud Khumalo
4 th	Mabatho Rakale	11 th	Lee-Ann Minakium
5 th	Basil Matthews	14 th	Keith Brown
7 th	Ivy Matthews	15 th	Maria Mhlongo
7 th	Gabriel Tholo	16 th	Val Lodge

18 th	Jack Williamson
22 nd	Abe Mokgohlane

22 nd	Evelyn Abrahams
23 rd	Neo Motlabane

June Anniversaries:

“ There is no feeling more comforting and consoling than knowing you are right next to the one you Love”
Anonymous

1 st	Sam & Nthabiseng Moswatlhe
1 st	John & Susan Alexander (51yrs)
4 th	Andrew & Yvonne Payne (50yrs)
7 th	Jerry & Beryl Bailey (42yrs)

23 rd	Neo & Beatrice Motlabane (8yrs)
23 rd	Basil & Ivy Matthews(20yrs)
26 rd	Tim & Jos Mncube(26yrs)

Although we endeavour to keep our records up-to-date, experience tells us that we often miss out on special dates. If you are celebrating a special occasion in the coming month that is not on the list please email Phumza at phumza.ntuli@anglicanjoburg.org.za so that we can update our lists.

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Dates for Diary

MAY		Diocesan	Bishop
Saturday	1	WORKERS DAY / FOX	
Sunday	2		Pastoral visit: St George, Fouchville
Tuesday	4	Clergy Day: St Joseph's	Clergy Day: St Joseph's
Wednesday	5		St Benedict AGM 15h30
Friday	7	Apologies for Synod	
Saturday	8	Good Governance Workshop / Discernment Conference / Diaconal Training / Transformers	Transformers
Sunday	9	Discernment Conference	Pastoral visit: St Andrew, Pimville / Discernment Conference Panelist meeting
Tuesday	11	Archdeaconry Region 1 Clergy Day / Diocesan Office Synod Planning	Diocesan Office Synod Planning Meeting
Thursday	13	ASCENSION DAY	
Saturday	15	Archdeaconry Region 2 Meeting / AWF meeting / Good Governance Workshop / Ordinands Training	
Tuesday	18	Bishop's House Clergy Quiet Day	Bishop's House Clergy Quiet Day
Wednesday	19	Archdeacons Meeting	Archdeacons Meeting
Friday	21	Synod	Synod
Saturday	22	Synod	Synod
Sunday	23	PENTECOST	Pastoral visit: Dobsonville 50th Anniversary / PM Sophiatown Mosaic Unveiling
Friday	28		LEAVE
Saturday	29	POST / Saints Lay Training / Anglicare	LEAVE
Sunday	30		LEAVE
Monday	31		LEAVE

JUNE		Diocesan	Bishop
Tuesday	1	Clergy Day	LEAVE

Wednesday	2		LEAVE
Thursday	3		LEAVE
Saturday	5	FOX	
Sunday	6	St John's College Confirmation	Pastoral visit: Christ Church, Mayfair / St John's College Confirmation
Wednesday	9	Independent / Government Schools Close	
Thursday	10	Vision Renewal Workshop	
Friday	11	Football World Cup starts / Vision Renewal Workshop / AWF Exec Retreat	
Saturday	12	Diaconal Training / Transformers	
Sunday	13		Pastoral visit: St John, Benmore
Tuesday	15	Archdeaconry Region 5 Clergy Meeting	
Wednesday	16	YOUTH DAY	
Saturday	19	Ordinands Training	
Sunday	20		Pastoral visit: St Francis, Parkview
Wednesday	23	Trustees	
Saturday	26	POST	
Sunday	27		Pastoral visit: St Andrew, Randburg

General Notices

- On 1st May Holy Cross Parish, Orlando West will be hosting the first session of a ten week Alpha Course. The course will be hosted every Saturday starting at 2pm to 4pm. For further information please contact Linda at 083 879 6569.
- St Benedicts, Rosettenville will be holding their AGM on 5th May, beginning with Evening Prayer at 5.30pm.
- A reminder that the next Transformers meeting will take place on the 8 May at St Joseph's, Sophiatown.
- The Soweto Gospel Choir will be performing at All Saints in Fourways Gardens on Friday 14th May at 19:00. Tickets can be purchased from Joy Smith at 083 530 3144. Booking is essential.