

AD CLERUM - APRIL 2011

My dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

A friend of mine told me recently that the manufacturers of the Easter eggs on sale in shops have, (presumably to broaden their target market and increase sales) dispensed with the word "Easter" on their eggs and have added instead the certification that the eggs are both kosher and halal. In other words they are no longer "Easter" eggs, which raises the question, "If they are not Easter eggs, why should we buy them to celebrate Easter at all? Should we not instead be looking for some new way to celebrate Easter that reflects the significance and importance of Easter for our faith? My friend, who happens to be the rector of a parish, has challenged his congregation to find new ways of expressing the importance of Easter in their lives, and says that he has been amazed at the novel and exciting suggestions that have been made.

This got me thinking about Easter; about its importance, about how we prepare ourselves for Easter, and how we celebrate not just Easter day, but the whole season of Easter. For the truth is that Easter is the very heart of our Christian faith – the antidote to human sin as it began in the Garden of Eden, and the moment of that new creation in which all things are made new.

In 1 Samuel 8, when the Jews ask Samuel for a king, it is so that they might be "like other nations." Samuel prays to God who tells Samuel that it is not Samuel they are rejecting as judge, but God that they are rejecting as their king over them. Even though Samuel tells the people what God has said, they continue to insist upon a king "... so that we may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:20). And so, despite claiming that God is their king, Israel becomes "like the other nations" with kings exactly like those of the other nations.

Perhaps that is why Tom Wright, in his book, "Jesus and the Victory of God," suggests that the Jewish exile did not end with the return of some of the exiles to Jerusalem, but ends only in Jesus. Jesus is the long awaited Messiah, the true Israel, because he alone is perfectly attuned and obedient to the will of God as king. And it is small wonder, then, that the Jews struggled to recognise Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah because they were still looking for and expecting a king like those of the other nations.

When Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done here on earth even as it is in heaven," it is an act of subversion because it is a prayer that prays for the overthrow of kingdoms that are "like those of other nations," so that the one, true reign of God may be made manifest.

Jesus on the cross is the holy remnant – the one who alone has not bowed his knee to other gods (cf. 1 Kings 19:18). And in that holy remnant, the holy people of God can once again be restored. As Jesus dies and is raised to resurrection life, so we too, through baptism, die and are raised to resurrection life in him. "If we have died with him ... we will also live with him. ... The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God" (Rom. 6: 8-10). As in baptism we are baptised into his death, so with him we are raised to

new life – a life now “lived to God.” Through baptism we become the restored Israel – a holy people, a royal priesthood whose life (both individually and corporately) is “lived to God.”

This is why in the early church baptisms took place only at Easter; it was the sacrament of entering into the mystery and power of the cross. Baptismal life is resurrection life and the renewal of our baptismal vows at Easter is a recommitment to living out the joy of resurrection life. Easter is not simply the most important day in our Christian calendar, it is not even a liturgical season; Easter is a way of life.

But it strikes me that baptism needs to be seen not so much as a rite of initiation by which we become members of a church “club” as one of actively living a new life as a holy people. By baptism we become a community of faith that models and makes visible resurrection life for the world to see. Our family life as the church community should be a living testimony of our prayer for God’s kingdom to come here on earth even as it is in heaven.

That is why the conflicts that so often exist within parishes are so serious. They are a negation of our prayer for God’s kingdom to come, a denial of our calling to build kingdom. Jonathan Edwards, one of the founding fathers of Anglicanism, said of such people:

“ ... their faces disagree with their hearts, and their mouths disagree with their hearts; they have the visage and show of saints, and the hearts of devils. Their prayers are filled with thanksgiving, adoration, and great honour to God, praise and glory to him, a show of humility before him, a show of repentance for sin, trust, thankfulness, desire of obedience, and trust in Christ alone; when within is nothing but a slight and contempt of God, enmity against God, distrust of God, pride, self-righteousness, obstinacy, and disobedience, without one jot or tittle of honour, or love, or trust, or humility, or repentance, or obedience, or any of those things that there is a show of in their prayers.”

Easter is a way of life; resurrection life – a way of living that is different because it is kingdom life; life “lived to God.” Resurrection life is a life of mystery and a wonder that is both pure gift from God and joy beyond description. Resurrection life is life lived in the very life of the Trinity.

For self reflection:

1. Is my baptism visible in the way I live my life? Is my life a walk of faith clearly visible to others? What do I need to be doing to more fully live resurrection life?

For group discussion:

1. Does our community life reflect the love and unity of life in the Trinity? What issues need to be addressed in our parish so that we might more fully be a holy people and a royal priesthood whose lives are “lived to God”?
2. How do we as a parish make visible in our community our prayer that God’s kingdom will come “... here on earth, even as it is in heaven”?

May our lives be visible and an ongoing symbol of Easter

+ Brian

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Renewal of Vows

There are a large number of road works and street closures in the CBD at present making access to the Cathedral very difficult. As a result we have decided to move the Renewal of Vows service on Maundy Thursday to the Parish of the **Church of the Resurrection, Meadowlands**. The service will take place at 07h00 as usual. Their street address is 450 Maseru Street, Zone 7, Meadowlands.

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: There is no Clergy Day this month. The next Clergy Day will take place at St Mark, Northriding on Tuesday the 3rd of May beginning at 09h00.

Easter Children: When is an Easter Egg, an Easter Egg? If it does not say it is an Easter Egg – *then it is **not** an Easter Egg*. Some sweet manufacturers have removed the word “Easter” from their packaging of Easter Eggs. Now if they are not marketing them as Easter Eggs – Why buy them? Creative ideas for Easter symbols – use real eggs, hard boiled and painted; make your own chocolate Easter eggs; paper-mache covered balloons, dried, cut open like a broken egg shell, painted and filled with treats. If the empty egg shell is to remind us of the empty tomb and the resurrection, we can be much more creative about this symbolism! (Last resort – Clicks are still selling “Easter” Eggs!) – Revd Cannon Peter Gunning.

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Reading Recommendations

Tom Wright has written a wonderful trilogy of books, one of which I recommended in my last Ad Clerum. I commend them all to you. The first is a book deceptively entitled, “**Simply Christian**” (described by one reviewer as “... the best introduction to Christianity since C.S. Lewis’ ‘Surprised by Joy’); the second is the one I recommended last month, “**Surprised by Hope**.” The last is “**After you Believe**,” a book on Christian character. Buy them, read them, be filled with amazement.

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Provincial News

- Please continue to pray for **Bishop Jo and Timeya Seoka** and for the apprehension of those who have made death threats against them.

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Diocesan Family News

- Please find a copy of the **April Prayer Diary** attached.
- The **Diocesan office** will be closed from 12h00 on the 21st of April and will be closed on the 26, 28th and 29th of April.

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Moves and Placements

- **Paul Germond** will be instituted as Rector of the Parish of St Augustine, Brixton at 15h00 on Sunday the 10th of April. All clergy (not only those from Archdeaconry Region 4) are invited to attend and to robe.
- **Gerard Sharp** has been appointed as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of St Gabriel, Florida with effect from the 1st of April 2011.

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Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

We would like to wish the following people a very happy birthday and wedding anniversary:-

Date	April	May
01	Cecil Lamb	
03	Joe & Mary Maboe Nigel Mollink	
04	Kenneth & Hilary Owen	
05	Morgan & Lynette Ellis Doug & Vanessa Michael	Gerard Sharp
06		Rob Hofmeyer
07	Tshepo MAloka	
08	Martin Louw	Andrew Philip Sue Ray
10	Keith & Pam Berning Tim & Rosemary Gray Peter Wilson	
11	Cyril Halkett	
12		Motlale Namu
13		Maureen Rowland-Aitken
14	Oupaki Moruthane	
15	Mothusimang Makata Paul Siaki	
16	Liziwe Moreo Doug Wessels Loreen McDougall	
17	Bill Salter Bikitsha Njumbuxa Mmalerato Molwantwa	Corny Mphaki
18	Cecil & Pamela Lamb	
19		Vicky Moroa
20	David Edwards Fred & Merle Robb	Gwyn Slade
21	Paul Letlala	
22	Eileen Wanckel	Margaret Steward

23	+Duncan Mary Maboe	Pearl Mokgohlane
24		Charles May
25		Nosipho Matubatuba
27		Yvonne Payne
28		Ntombi Molefe Tshepo Matubatuba Mlajeni & Nokwezi Dodo John & Amy Herbert
30		Millie Smyth

Should there be any errors or omissions in the above dates please contact Noxolo at the Diocesan office.

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Dates for Diary

Please note that the Pastoral visit to Ruimsig scheduled for the 10th of April has been cancelled and that the date for the St John's College confirmation has been changed to the 29th of May.

APRIL		Parish	Diocesan	Bishop
Friday	1	Parish Accounts to Diocesan Office		
Saturday	2		STILIM & FOX I	Diocesan Institutions Conference
Sunday	3			Pastoral visit: Senoane
Monday	4			JIF
Tuesday	5		Region 2 Archdeaconry Clergy Day	Formal Tribunal
Wednesday	6		Management Team Dinner	Formal Tribunal
Friday	8	Independent Schools Close		
Saturday	9		FOX II	
Sunday	10			Institution of Rector at Brixton 15h00
Monday	11	Government Schools Open		
Saturday	16		Ordinands / Transformers / Anglicare	
Sunday	17	PALM SUNDAY	Choir Fellowship, Mhlakeng	
Wednesday	20		DFB	
Friday	22	GOOD FRIDAY		Yeoville
Sunday	24	EASTER		Yeoville
Monday	25	FAMILY DAY		
Tuesday	26		Diocesan Office Closed	
Wednesday	27	FREEDOM DAY		
Thursday	28		Diocesan Office Closed	
Friday	29		Diocesan Office Closed	
Saturday	30			

MAY		Parish	Diocesan	Bishop
Sunday	1	WORKERS DAY		
Monday	2	PUBLIC HOLIDAY	JDACF Fun Day	
Tuesday	3	Independent Schools Open / Clergy Day	Clergy Day	Clergy Day
Saturday	7	Good Governance Workshop	STILIM & FOX I / Archdeaconry Region 4 Clergy & Lay Rep meeting	Self Supporting Clergy Training

Sunday	8			Pastoral Visist: Simunye
Tuesday	10		Archdeaconry Region 1 Clergy Day	Anglican Educational Trust
Thursday	12		Discernment Conference Panelist Meeting	Discernment Conference Panelist Meeting
Saturday	14	Good Governance Workshop	FOX II / Parish Minister Training / Archdeaconry Region 1 Council Meeting	
Saturday	21	Good Governance Workshop	Ordinands / Transformers / Discernment Conference / POST	
Sunday	22		Discernment Conference	Pastoral visit: Mzimphlope
Wednesday	25		Trustees	
Saturday	28		Anglicare	
Sunday	29			Pastoral visit: North Riding / St John's College Confirmation

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General Notices

- The Parish of St Augustine, Orange Grove has an **unfurnished flat to rent**, available immediately. It has one bedroom, a bathroom, a lounge, open plan kitchen and a large, secure balcony. It is close to bus and taxi routes. Rent will be charged at R3,000 per month. For enquiries please contact Wendy at 083 325 4694 or 011 640 5640

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