APRIL FREE

marston times

PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS

THE REALITY OF EASTER

"Faith" wrote a schoolboy, "means believing what you know isn't true." As we move towards the great Festival of Easter, I wonder if you feel this about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Is it something which Christians have thought up to take the pain out of dying and bereavement?

Many people ought to do their home-work on the doctrine of the Resurrection. They would find that the evidence is better attested than Caesar's Wars. They might even be surprised that St.John's Gospel - the mystical one - is extremely accurate in its time-sequence of the events leading up to the Crucifixion, and the place names of the city. The author is also very careful in his choice of words in describing what the disciples and the women found when they came to the empty tomb.

But the Church has not built its faith on literary accuracy, but on the fact of the Living and Risen Christ.

Scared out of their wits, frightened to unlock their doors, the early disciples either fled the city or wept their sorrows away. Then suddenly the whole picture changes. In place of disillusionment and sadness, there is faith and hope and joy.

Timid men become flaming apostles, unafraid to die for their faith. Orthodox Jews re-orientate their calendar, and make Sunday - the Day of Resurrection - the focal point of their week. People do not do this kind of thing with their tongues in their cheeks . . . inwardly thinking it might not be true.

They do it because they have come to know and trust in a Risen and Living Christ, who has lifted them out of their despair, given them a new purpose in living, and given them a new concept of death i.e. as a point of transition, and not a terminal point.

A few years ago a young Communist harangued an Orthodox priest, ridiculing his faith, smearing his calling. The priest and those with him listened in silence. Then when the young man finished speaking the priest raised his hands, and with a radiant face shouted: "CHRIST IS RISEN!"

There was an immediate response as all around him hands were raised and voices in unison replied: "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

May the Risen Christ be very real to you too this Eastertide.

Paul N. Rimmer

Vicar.

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Some Thoughts for Easter & Holy Week

. . . It all began in a garden . . .

"I shall be glad when I can get out on the garden again", declared someone to me whilst visiting on a rather dull February day! Yes . . . and when we can get out on the garden after the cold season of winter when nature seems 'dead' it is thrilling to see that underneath it all there is life . . . When there comes across the face of the earth a sense of a new beginning.

We are fortunate that in the West our Easter Festival comes in the Spring of the year when Mother Nature herself has a parable to teach us. The clocks go on . . . the evenings are lighter and weather permitting, out into the gardens we shall go! As you dig and rake and 'slog' and groan with the resulting backache, will you think for a moment of one particular garden? For it all began in a garden . . . 'Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden'.

What began you may well ask and whose garden? It belonged to a man by the name of Joseph we believe . . . not the Joseph we think of at Christmas time, but Joseph of Arimathea . . . and in that garden was a tomb, and the first person to occupy that new tomb was a Man they called Jesus. He had been crucified. He had come through another garden. The Garden of Gethsamane. It is a garden we cannot by-pass. We have to pass through it to reach Joseph's garden and as we pass, we shall see a hill. The Hill of Calvary 'outside the city wall' where 'God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to die for us'.

Easter comes and goes and comes again. We buy bigger and better Easter eggs maybe for the children. What does it really mean to us? The Story of the Garden is still going on because the Man they called Jesus was the Son of God, and on that first Good Friday He was buried in that new tomb. Then came a day of waiting . . . a day of sadness . . . but on the third day . . . the first day of the week . . . into that Garden came LIFE. Also into that garden came a woman. Mary Magdalene before the dawning of the day 'while it was still dark' . . . to find . . . a Gardener . . . at least she thought He was. That Gardener was none other than Christ the Lord Risen and Alive for evermore, and that for the Christians is where life begins.

There are many origins of the word Easter, but for the Christian it can only mean that Jesus Christ who died for love of us, rose again in triumph over sin and death. Easter Day is the gladdest day in the year. So glad that we celebrate it for forty days! It is a day full of life and love and hope. What better message could we have in these days?! So . . . the garden is a good place to be at this time of the year! We all know so well that verse seen in our parks and gardens:-

"The kiss of the sun for pardon
The song of the birds for mirth
One's nearer God's heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on the earth"

True? Maybe . . . but only partially true. Don't let us leave it there. This same Jesus longs for our allegiance and once He has it who knows what will happen?! Great and wonderful things . . .

Every Sunday - every first day of the week - is a 'little Easter **Day**' where His friends have met together all down the ages for prayer and thanksgiving; for fellowship, and above all for 'the breaking of the bread'. May you know the power of His Resurrection in your life.

Olive J. Lodge
Deaconess.

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DATES FOR APRIL

Sunday, 1st

MOTHERING SUNDAY

11.15 a.m. Special Service for Parents and Young Children

Wednesday, 4th

"CHRIST AND COLOUR"

7.30 p.m. Canon Leonard Schiff speaks at St. Joseph's R.C. School, Headley Way

Thursday, 5th

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

8 p.m. St. Nicholas Church Hall, Marston

Wednesday, 11th

"CHRIST AND THE HOMELESS"

7.30 p.m. Father Eltin Daly speaks at the Marston Road Congregational Church

Saturday, 14th

CONFIRMATION SERVICE

3 p.m. Christ Church Cathedral

Sunday, 15th

PALM SUNDAY

Palm Crosses will be distributed at the Church services

Thursday, 19th

MAUNDY THURSDAY

7.30 P.M. Holy Communion

Friday, 20th

GOOD FRIDAY

8 a.m. Ante-Communion
10 a.m. Children's Service
11 a.m. UNITED SERVICE at St. Michael's New Marston

Sunday, 22nd

EASTER DAY

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion (said)
10.00 a.m. Parish Easter Communion
11.15 a.m. Children's Instruction
3.00 p.m. Baptism after prior arrangement
6.30 p.m. Evensong and Sermon

Monday, 23rd

EASTER MONDAY

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion
10.00 a.m. to Noon Over 60's Club Coffee Morning and Market

'Phone Mr. P. Sheppard: Oxford 46294 if you wish to advertise in the Marston Times

Parish Council Notes

The Council has decided once again to enter the "Best Kept Village" competition organised by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

At the Parish meeting the possibility of securing an improvement in the village lighting was discussed. The Clerk stated that if the lighting was improved to current Highway Lighting standards, the County Council would assume responsibility for maintenance. In the long run this would be less expensive than to continue to maintain the present system.

The Parish Meeting expressed general approval of this suggestion. The County Council are to be asked to prepare the plans and specifications for reconsideration at a later date.

CHILDREN OF THE CHURCH

As from Sunday, 8th April, the instruction for the Nursery children will be at 11.15 a.m. in St. Nicholas' Church Hall and not in the Village Hall.

We shall be delighted to welcome any children of three years old up to school age, and Mrs. Gibbons will still be in charge of this group.

'HELP! WE NEED SOMEBODY!'

GIRL GUIDES

Rosemary Fraser has built up the company, and there is now a keen group of young Guides. Unfortunately Rosemary is moving to Swindon. There are two good young leaders, but an adult is needed to help. Among the 1300 homes into which the Marston Times is dropped, one must surely contain someone willing to do this. Please come forward if it's you. You need not have been a Guide or know anything about it. There are many ways of training provided. If you are interested please contact either Deaconess Lodge or myself at 6 Cotswold Crescent. We do urgently need help.

I. F. Read

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 1973

ADVANCE NOTICE

GRAND JUMBLE SALE

Saturday, 12th May

in Church Hall and Scout Hut

Helpers needed. Please save your jumble

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

14th to 19th May

Volunteers are needed for House to House Collection

If you can help please contact: Helen Foster 14 Quarry High Street, Headington, Tel. No. 63358.

Teamwork & Stewardship

We celebrated Shrove Tuesday with a rollicking Wine and Cheese Party. Lots of people met newcomers to the parish, and they in turn heard from the secretaries of parish organisation what was going on in the parish.

The Vicar's Warden asked for volunteers to Spring Clean and Limewash the Church. A night or two later pews were swathed in polythene, and stalwart men and women were either brushing the walls or stirring a dustbinful of white mix that literally brought tears to one's eyes! Somehow we got it all back to place again for the following Sunday, and then the night following devastation occurred again as we 'touched up' the bits that were left. Never has Mrs. Rimmer's brew of tea tasted better than at 9.30 p.m. each night, and for Hilda Bestley's buns and Marie Guse's shortbread we'd limewash the whole place again!

It was a great effort in teamwork, and demonstrated that stewardship means rolling up your sleeves as well as putting your hand in your pocket. Thank you everyone . . . and congratulations to Vic Cardy on organising a splendid effort.

MARSTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

This Association flourished when it successfully campaigned for the re-aligning of the Marston Ferry Road. Although there is now no issue so burning, the association is far from defunct. In 1972 it can point to the re-introduction of a bus service to the village in the evenings and provision for a foot-bridge from Arlington Drive to the public foot-path to the University Parks as proof of this. The majority of us who now take no active part in this association have cause to be grateful to the minority who do.

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