

Dear all

Memory is an interesting phenomenon. As I say Morning Prayer each day in the Easter Season, the first canticle is what is known as the Easter Anthems. I can recall all those many years ago as a boy chorister singing these, in the Book of Common Prayer version. I still remember the excitement – after the (in my mind – well I was a young child) dreariness of Lent, suddenly all was bright and exciting. The words are taken straight from 3 passages of scripture. I loved the imagery – old and new leaven, first-fruits – and the contrasts. Though I didn't realise it at the time, it was the portrayal of the new resurrection life that was so exciting.

Below you can see the words. Some verses are triumphant throughout, such as verses 1, 3 & 6. But I still remember so clearly singing the first part of the others quietly, and the second much more loudly. Verse 4 – (quiet) in that he died... once... (loud) but in that he liveth... Verse 5 – (quiet) dead to sin... (loud) but ALIVE... And those last 2 verses – they still thrill me even now. What a statement of the victory Christ has won for us all – especially at this difficult time.

- 1 Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:  
therefore let us keep the feast;
- 2 Not with the old leaven,  
nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness:  
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.  
*1 Corinthians 5.7b, 8*
- 3 Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more:  
death hath no more dominion over him.
- 4 For in that he died, he died unto sin once:  
but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.
- 5 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin:  
but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Romans 6.9-11*
- 6 Christ is risen from the dead:  
and become the first fruits of them that slept.
- 7 For since by man came death:  
by man came also the resurrection of the dead.
- 8 For as in Adam all die:  
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.  
*1 Corinthians 15.20-22*

I wish I could find a recording with the chant I knew so well. Unfortunately not – there are hardly any recordings of the piece at all – but I did find this old recording of The Choir of King's College, Cambridge, conducted by Boris Ord.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSQzky8AkdE>

The Church of England has produced a range of prayers for use at this time, including prayers for children. The link is here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/coronavirus-covid-19-liturgy-and-prayer>

In my phone calls around, I discovered that Penny Hebblewhite has been involved in making scrubs etc. for the NHS. She started by joining the Facebook site 'For the love of scrubs - Hinchinbrook and Peterborough'. If anyone is interested in putting their time and talents to this wonderful use, do hunt the site out. If you don't do Facebook, Penny has said that she will act as coordinator for the Priory. They need people to sew, cotton fabric washed at 60 degrees and unwanted pillowcases and duvet covers etc. They make scrubs, scrub hats, washing bags and cross body bags, as those wearing PPE can't get to their pockets. Penny would be happy for people to contact me directly. Let me know, and I will pass on her details.

After having given you the link to that exquisitely awful dubbed 'Zadok...', Philip Astle tells me that he recognised David Blackadder (trumpet) and the lady oboist who both played for the superb Messiah by Jeremy Jepson and Stamford Choral Society last Christmas. As an antidote, he suggested to hunt out the very different, and beautifully sung Sound of Silence by Voces8.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXJNLb71VH4>

Another stunningly beautiful piece is Morten Lauridsen's 'O magnum mysterium' – this recording by King's College Cambridge.

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum, ut animalia viderent Dominum natum jacentem in praesepe. O beata Virgo, cuius viscera meruerunt portare Dominum Jesum Christum. Alleluia.

O great mystery and wonderful sacrament, that beasts should see the new-born Lord lying in a manger. O blessed virgin, whose body was worthy to bear the Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia

(Yes, I know it's a Christmas piece, but it is so beautiful – and, as I always say Jesus was born to die... and then to rise again!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KvrbYZB2vY>

It seems quite appropriate to finish with Paula Gooder's reflection from Wednesday – Peace to You.

You may like to read John 20.19-23 before you begin.

Something that comes through all of Jesus' resurrection encounters is his patient gentleness. We might have been tempted to declare that everyone should be joyful immediately or to ask them why they hadn't understood everything yet, when he had already told them what would happen. But Jesus didn't. In each encounter he came alongside, listened to their woes, and responded to them where and as they were.

In John 20.19-23 when Jesus appeared to the disciples he didn't ask them what they were doing cowering behind locked doors. He didn't even ask them why they hadn't listened to Mary Magdalene who had just told them she'd seen the risen Lord (20.18). He said simply 'Peace be with you' or more literally 'Peace to you'. In Hebrew, the word peace – *shalom* – means to be whole, complete, at one, well. He knew in that moment that what the disciples needed more than anything else was peace.

The risen Christ still comes to us in the same way – with patient gentleness: not demanding from us what we are unable to give, not asking why we are not this or that, not insisting that we have everything worked out in our heads. The risen Christ comes and says simply 'Peace to you'.

This Easter may we find a way to give ourselves a break and to hear and then to feel deep within the greeting of the risen Christ to each one of us – peace to you.

Don't forget to tune into the church Facebook page on Sunday for our next Live-streamed service.

Stay safe

Blessings and love

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