

Fr Hoyal Writes

The closing words of my article for last Easter were: 'Be of good cheer! He has overcome the world, and in him so shall we. Faith and hope and love remain fully in order.'

They certainly do. 'For these three things abide: faith, hope and love. And the greatest of them is love.'

And how pertinent that famous trio from 1 Corinthians 13 remains as we celebrate Easter a year on.

You might think of the resurrection as a great act of power, and so it is - but of the power of God's love, not of his might for its own sake.

Love is surely the primary category in the incarnation and the atonement. The following well-known verses illustrate the matter:

God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him (1 John 4.16).

God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3.16).

The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep (John 10.11).

My Father doth love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again...I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. (John 10.17,18).

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15.13).

Father and Son are one in a perfect unity of the divine Love. Viewed from earth, there can be nothing greater than the Father's gift of his Son for our salvation, and the Son's gift of himself for us in loving

obedience to the Father. Christ's life and death really are the Supreme Sacrifice – nothing more total, more costly, more holy, more loving.

The resurrection isn't a reward, albeit a remarkable one, for being good (supremely good, even). Nor is it a contrived happy ending to make up for prior hurts and sorrows. No.

The resurrection is what happens when you give yourself as totally to God as Jesus did to the Father on our behalf. It is analogous to how, say, when raised to an amazingly high temperature, matter transforms radically and behaves entirely new ways. The resurrection is a vital transformative point, a profound theological singularity where a new world and new spiritual possibilities open up to us.

Not only is the cross the supreme act of love. It is concomitantly a supreme act of faith and a supreme act of hope: faith and hope in God who in his love creates ex nihilo and can be trusted to bring life out of death and make all things new. Christ goes to his cross in total loving trust in the gracious character of the Father, a trust tested to most horrific destruction, to the point that all has been sacrificed and God seems terrifyingly nowhere - 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

The resurrection is the victory of faith and hope and, above all, love over the very worst that can be done against God and his loving purposes.

At the resurrection a grieving woman, distraught at finding the tomb empty, is amazed and rapturous when, recognising his voice, she realises that it is no unknown gardener before her, but the Master she so loves.

A stubbornly sceptical friend is astounded into sheer adoration when one he could not believe was risen now stands before him, pointing to the nail marks.

Weary companions welcoming a fascinating guest into their home after a long journey on foot suddenly grasp that the one breaking bread with them is the Living Bread himself, very much alive.

It is in ways and episodes like this that the victory is recognised and received at the human level. Joy and awe intermixed mark the recognition of one who truly died now truly living.

But just as the resurrection victory is at heart the work of faith, hope and love stretched to the most testing limits, so individual appropriation of the victory depends upon our personal response to the Risen Lord in faith, hope and love.

Mary Magdalene's love is self-evident as heartbreak turns to exultation and she has to be discouraged from clinging to Jesus. There is work for her to do – and no doubt for us too.

Seeing the Lord for himself and doubting no more, Thomas now has faith to worship Jesus as Lord and God, faith that is the mainspring of authentic apostolic endeavour.

Initially so despondent, the Emmaus friends feel their spirits soar as their companion expounds the scriptures on the road. Hope and joy return as they recognise the Lord when he breaks bread with them. Weary as they are, they think nothing of travelling back to Jerusalem to share their jubilation with the disciples. There is hope for the future, after all.

Let us take our cue from the Easter saints. May the faith and hope and love perfectly exemplified in the passion and exaltation of Jesus find their counterpart in faith renewed, hope enlarged and love deepened in our own lives as we greet our Easter Lord.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard Hoyle".

ALL SAINTS with ST JOHN, CLIFTON
Holy Week & Easter 2012



PALM SUNDAY

1 April

- 8.00 am Mass & Palm Distribution
- 9.30 am PALM SUNDAY FAMILY SERVICE
- 10.45 am PALM PROCESSION & SOLEMN MASS
- 6.00 pm Evensong & Benediction

- Monday in Holy Week 7.30 am & 7.30 pm Mass
- Tuesday in Holy Week 10.30 am & 7.30 pm Mass
- Wednesday in Holy Week 9.30 am & 7.30 pm Mass

MAUNDY THURSDAY

5 April

- 10.30 am Mass (for those unable to attend later)

7.30 pm	SOLEMN MASS with Footwashing & Stripping of Altars - Watch till midnight
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GOOD FRIDAY

6 April

- 10.00 am GOOD FRIDAY FAMILY SERVICE

12 noon	"TIME AT THE CROSS" - Good Friday Devotional Service (one hour)
1.30 pm	SOLEMN LITURGY OF GOOD FRIDAY

HOLY SATURDAY/EASTER EVE

7 April

- 12.00 noon Blessing of Easter Garden

9.00 pm	GREAT EASTER VIGIL & FIRST MASS OF EASTER
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EASTER DAY

8 April

- 8.00 am Mass
- 9.30 am Short EASTER DAY FAMILY MASS
- 11.00 am PROCESSION & FESTIVAL MASS
- 6.00 pm Festival Evensong & Benediction



‘Seeking: In the Wilderness’

[Lent 1 sermon preached by Fr Hoyal at All Saints on 26.3.12 in the Seek and Ye Shall Find series]

‘And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.’ (Mark 1.12,13)

In Mark’s Gospel, that’s all you get. No mention of Jesus fasting. No mention of the three temptations that Matthew and Luke tell us about. Mark is brief and enigmatic. What did he think was going on?

First of all, note that the action comes immediately after Jesus’ baptism. The Father’s voice has just declared him his own dear Son; and the Spirit of God is visibly resting upon him.

But it’s the Spirit who pushes him straight off into the wilderness. He’s not led by the Spirit, says Mark. No he’s driven, he’s thrown out into the wilderness. It’s about something Jesus just has to do, just has to face up to. And it’s all rather violent.

Why the wilderness? Years of wonderful natural-history television show the world’s natural wildernesses as wild beautiful challenging places where brilliantly adapted plants and animals manage to survive extreme conditions. We are awed.

For St Mark’s generation, the wilderness was a fearful, desolate realm, home not just to wild beasts that might attack at any time, but also the abode of demons and evil spirits as savage as the beasts. It was just the place you would expect to encounter the devil. It was a very testing environment, physically and spiritually.

And testing is what the devil is up to. No doubt, particular temptations present themselves, like the ones Matthew and Luke describe. But as Mark sees it, it’s essentially an extended trial of strength, a testing of moral will, of personal metal, of spiritual power.

And how little we're told. There's no result declared. All we're told is, yes, there amid dangerous beasts, angels – good spirits, if you like – look after him. And that's it. Then it's the next thing. Back to Galilee, and telling people about God's kingdom.

'Seek and you will find,' Jesus has told us. Certainly, finding the wilderness isn't difficult. The moment you realise that baptism has made *you* God's child, the moment you twig that you too have been anointed by God's Spirit with a unique Christian destiny, you'll soon find the Spirit not just leading you but actively driving you, chucking you into testing wilderness.

Of course, there's Vanity Fair and the wilderness of this world, as The Pilgrim's Progress puts it – the relentless self-seeking human jungle, where many kinds of beast and demon abound. Wake up to your Christian identity, and the Spirit shows you a moral wasteland, a spiritual desert, that is all around.

But opting out is not an option. The Spirit has put you there to face up to the devil. If you do, the beasts and demons won't get the better of you. And there will be angels to look after you. You won't be without protection and help from God.

As countless saints and psychiatrists can tell you, there is also the wilderness within, that strange personal inner world that sometimes we hardly know, equally the domain of all sorts of dangerous beasts and malevolent demons.

It's a complex wilderness, the human psyche, and seeking true knowledge about ourselves is a precarious and difficult enterprise. For most people, those places within are to be visited only with the care and support of wise mentors. For some there's wilderness within that has dangerously taken them over, and urgent help is needed.

The wisest course for most of us is to seek the truth about ourselves through openness to the Spirit. Let him guide or drive us in, as he will, and let it be in the context of prayerful ongoing discipleship, making full use of the Church's spiritual provision, and not least, I would say,

the sacrament of penance – confession. Facing up to the devil needs the most powerful weapons we've got.

But do especially remember the angels. In whatever form, they ministered to Jesus in his wilderness, and they will minister to us in ours.

LET THERE BE WARMTH

The Trustees of All Saints Endowments are pleased to have been able to fund the new central heating boilers recently installed in the tower. They are energy efficient and replace the old boilers that have served us well for many years.

Roger Hopkins
Chairman of the Trustees

ALL SAINTS SOCIETY ('The Bar') AGM

The All Saints Society provided the means whereby we can (legally) serve and enjoy drinks Sunday by Sunday, at major festivals and other events. As a 'members' club' the profits are used as the membership decides at the AGM.

This year's AGM is at 12.45pm on Sunday 15th April 2012 in the Randall Room.

All members are encourage to attend in order to approve the accounts, elect officers, decide disbursements and other matters.

The 'Bar' makes an important contribution to the social life of All Saints and this year funded the complete refurbishment of the toilets.

New members are always very welcome. Why not pop up on any Sunday after coffee?

Roger Hopkins
Secretary

Easter Monday Walk

This year we are going to do a circuit of Blagdon Lake, one of the reservoirs for Bristol. We propose to meet by the New Inn in Blagdon (OS ref ST 505589) at 11.30 and then wander for 5 miles round Blagdon Lake on country lanes and footpaths. Those who enjoyed the geological diversions at Middle Hope last year may wish to know that we shall be walking over the Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group which includes the Nempnett Thrubwell Sandstone (Arden Sandstone Formation). These rocks were deposited 206-248 ma ago when the British Isles were a tiny part of a supercontinent and we were located 15-20° North of the Equator in a vast desert basin.

Please bring a packed lunch and come prepared for uneven and wet ground. Tea and buns will be available when we get back to All Saints, chez Benton. All are most welcome to join us and we look forward to seeing you on the day

Bishop's Message for April 2012

Redemption and risk

This month Bishop Lee offers some reflections following his recent accident.

Ash Wednesday seems a long time ago. At the beginning of Lent I penned some thoughts on our Bishops' Microblog (<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/news/microblog/>), which began with the words used in that day's liturgy: "Remember you are dust and to dust you will return. Turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ." In that piece I offered an invitation to consider how much we are prepared to risk.

Three days later I was involved in a rather spectacular accident half way through a bike race when the cyclist in front of me suddenly lost control of his machine and went down. Three of us ended up on the circuit tarmac but whereas the others got back on their bikes to finish the race I needed hospitalisation. This provided a more immediate opportunity to mull over my words than I had either anticipated or desired!

People become aware of their frailty at different times and in various ways. The racing driver Stirling Moss continued to fling cars around race tracks at ridiculous speeds until he was over 80 years of age. Then he found himself feeling afraid behind the wheel and knew it was time to stop. I am now persuaded that bunch circuit racing involves too much risk of a crash for me to enter again. But does that mean I should stop road racing altogether or even mothball my bike? (I suspect you know the answer to that.)

Over the years I have met many people who have become overly risk averse because of a damaging experience in life. As a result of their hurt (usually emotional rather than physical) they have made a decision 'not to do anything like that again'. Those who have been badly let down or feel betrayed by someone in the family or a business would rather pull up the drawbridge than risk further wounding. In the Church, ministers and church members consciously or unconsciously decide there are 'no go' areas because of previous bitter experiences and disappointments. I regularly meet people -

leaders and members - who have been seriously bruised through belonging to a church and I can see they have effectively opted out even if they have not actually left.

This may contradict what the Church seeks to be but we recognise it as a reality and very understandable. Yet it is in our corporate and individual frailty that we find opportunity to discover the power of redemption. What we celebrate particularly through Holy Week and Easter, and week by week in the Eucharist, is God's redemptive purpose and power. Believing in and practising this redemption means being prepared to put ourselves at risk again, not disengaging or shutting up shop. To trust again, to offer ourselves in service, to forgive, to give a lead, to re-commit.

And this includes when we have badly let down ourselves and our Lord. After all that led up to the crucifixion Simon-Peter wanted to write himself out of the script but Jesus had very different ideas. Simon-Peter did not need writing off but redemption: healing and re-energising for the task. If this is what you need to get back on track as a disciple our Diocesan Healing team are available to assist you (<http://www.bristol.anglican.org/ministry/cmh/index.html>). I for one have been very grateful for this ministry.

+Lee

**Next *Christian in Science Bristol* talk:
Dr John Bimson, Tutor in Old Testament,
Trinity Theological College, Bristol
8 pm Friday 11 May 2012 All Saints Clifton**

Thinking through the Fall

Strategies for interpreting the Genesis account of Adam and Eve in its human and cosmic dimensions

Evolutionary theory and the complexity of the human genome appear to rule out our descent from a single ancestral pair. However, some

Christians, while wanting to embrace a scientific understanding of human origins, remain convinced that the integrity of traditional doctrines of the fall and salvation demands a historical Adam and Eve. Dr John Bimson will examine some recent strategies for resolving the dilemma. Suggested donation £4 to cover speaker travel, room hire and printing costs. No need to book.

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<p>DISABILITY AWARENESS AND TRAINING DAY Saturday 21 April 1000 am - 5.30 pm St Stephen's Church St Stephen's Street Bristol BS1 1EQ This important event deserves our attention. Calling Auriol Britton on 0117 9668853 for details and to book a free place. Please also see porch notice.</p>

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FRIENDS OF ALALAY (SANTA CRUZ)

Registered charity no. 1123425

Spring 2012 Newsletter from Annie Syrett

Spring has arrived at last and I want to begin by thanking the many generous people and organizations who have supported my charity in so many different ways over the past year – financially or otherwise. You have made such a difference to the lives of the street children. Just to remind you, money still goes a long way in Bolivia.

As an example of this, around £500 can pay for one year of a vocational course to train an ex-street child as a car mechanic, IT specialist, caterer, hairdresser or nurse's assistant. Last month I helped to co-ordinate my second school working visit to Alalay, which proved to be another great success. A group of sixth-formers and staff from Tudor Hall School, Banbury worked very hard decorating children's cabins, organizing many sports and craft activities with the kids, and even managing to perform in a talent show on the last night!

I hope to be in Bolivia again in late May of this year to launch a new set of projects which may include: the onsite dental unit mentioned previously, a further extension of the textile workshop so that more clothing items can be made and/or sold, and additional cabin maintenance. The renovation of the prevention house has taken longer than planned, but all other projects, such as the English teaching, textile unit, vegetable garden and bakery are proceeding really well and progress will be described in later newsletters.

I'd like to mention just two projects now in more detail - vocational training and the medical centre. We are currently funding six adolescents through their vocational training. These include (names have been changed): Carlos, a sociable, bright and helpful teenager, who loves football and playing sports and is being supported through his 18-month computer maintenance and graphic design course, qualifying in January 2013. Guiselda, who has been in Alalay with her three sisters since early childhood. She is studying for two years to be a nurse's assistant, has the patience and ability to do well in her subject and often uses her medical experience to help the other children at Alalay. In her free time, she enjoys watching TV and walking in the park.

The medical centre continues to provide vital help and save money – the following is an extract from a note written by the young Bolivian volunteer woman doctor who now runs the unit. “It was previously expensive to take the children to the doctors or to hospital, and little preventative action could be afforded. There has been a great improvement in the children's health since the centre opened”.

Thank you all so very much for your continuing support. My website has now been totally updated with much more information – please do take a look. Suggestions for improvement are much appreciated!

Annie Syrett, Bristol, England - March 2012

www.alalay.co.uk

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Cofe Responds to “Same-Sex Marriage” Consultation

From Bristol diocese's website 16.3. 12

The Church of England has stated a summary of its position in relation to “same-sex marriage” as an initial response to the Government’s consultation on whether to redefine marriage to accommodate those of the same sex.



“The Church of England is committed to the traditional understanding of the institution of marriage as being between one man and one woman.

“The Church of England supports the way civil partnerships offer same-sex couples equal rights and responsibilities to married heterosexual couples. Opening marriage to same-sex couples would confer few if any new legal rights on the part of those already in a civil partnership, yet would require multiple changes to law, with the definition of marriage having to change for everyone.

“The issue of whether marriage should be redefined to include those of the same-sex is a more complicated picture than has been painted. Arguments that suggest ‘religious marriage’ is separate and different from ‘civil marriage’, and will not be affected by the proposed redefinition, misunderstand the legal nature of marriage in this country. They mistake the form of the ceremony for the institution itself.

“Currently, the legal institution of marriage into which people enter is the same whether they marry using a civil or a religious form of ceremony. Arguments that seek to treat ‘religious marriage’ as being a different institution fail to recognise the enduring place of the established church in providing marriages that have full state recognition. The Church of England will continue to argue against changing the definition of marriage, which has supported society for so long.”

This position is one that the Bishop of Bristol and the Bishop of Swindon fully support. The Archbishops’ Council will respond to the Consultation in detail in due course

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ALL SAINTS ARTS presents

'HEART'S DELIGHT'

An evening of relaxing and light-hearted music

Wednesday 18 April at 7.30 pm

With Niall Hoskin baritone, John Davenport piano The Jewel Trio

Tickets £8: HollisMorgan 9 Waterloo St, Clifton 0117 9736565, BHF Books & Music 148 Whiteladies Rd 0117 97639274 or at the door

In aid of the British Heart Foundation

CONCERT MATINEE

4 pm Saturday 5 May

Joséphine Goddard soprano

Free admission Retiring collection Tea and Cake after

CONCERT MATINEE EXTRA

4 pm Saturday 19 May

Ada Belidis lyric soprano accompanied on the organ

- sacred romantic programme including Mozart, Handel, Gounod, Saint-Saens

Free admission Retiring collection Tea and Cake after

NB In aid of All Hallows Easton Restoration Appeal

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ST PETERSBURG BLAGOVEST ENSEMBLE

This brilliant group make a welcome return to All Saints to sing Russian church music and folk music

7.30 pm Wednesday 23 May Tickets £10

CONFIRMATION 2012

The Bishop of Ebbsfleet presides at a combined All Saints/All Hallows Confirmation on Friday 29 June, the Feast of SS Peter & Paul, at All Hallows Easton. Those who would like to know more about being prepared for confirmation are asked to contact Fr Hoyal.

Thoughts on marriage

Father Richard has referred to the Government's proposals for "same-sex marriage" as a hot potato. Indeed it is, albeit (in my opinion) only a half-baked one. I offer the following thoughts in the hope that they may clarify our thinking on the issue.

I start with the existing teaching of the Church of England. This is found in the Book of Common Prayer, which is by law one of the doctrinal standards to which all clergy are bound to give assent. The Marriage Service, in its preamble, asserts that

- Marriage is instituted by God.
- The causes for which it is ordained are:
 - First, the procreation and nurture of children.
 - Second, to be the proper context for sexual activity ("to avoid fornication," or, as the 1928 Prayer Book, which in no way intended to alter the Church's teaching, puts it, "that the natural instincts and affections, implanted by God, should be hallowed and directed aright.")
 - Third, for the mutual support of the couple in good times and bad.
- In the body of the Service it is made clear in numerous places that Marriage is between a man and a woman (e.g. "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" etc.)
- It is also implied that Marriage is for life ("As long as ye both shall live," and, "Till death us do part," etc.)
- It is clearly asserted that no human power can dissolve a Marriage made before God. ("O God, who... didst teach that it should never

be lawful to put asunder those whom thou by Matrimony hadst made one," etc.)

Like it or not, this *is* clearly what the Church of England professes to believe and teach, and will continue to be, so as long as the Book of Common Prayer retains its legal position as a standard of doctrine.

When Parliament introduced Civil Marriage, it was in order that the civil and legal benefits flowing from Marriage should be available also to those who either did not wish for a religious (or at least Christian) ceremony, or were for some reason ineligible for it. However, in separate legislation, regarding divorce, Parliament enacted that these civil and legal consequences (both rights and obligations) might be terminated after due process in the Courts. Besides such divorce proceedings, it was also the case that both religious and civil Marriage could be declared null and void on the grounds of wilful non-consummation. This clearly implies that the "procreative orientation" of Marriage was still regarded as essential in every case.

More recently, Parliament has created "civil partnerships", open to couples who are of the same sex, which grants them many of the benefits which follow from Marriage. However, I am not aware that there is any requirement *in law* that such partnerships must include sexual activity between the partners, in such wise that they might be nullified for "non-consummation" (however that might be understood in the case of same-sex couples). Thus clearly civil partnerships are not the same thing in law as marriage.

If Civil Marriage were to be opened to same-sex couples and different-sex couples on exactly the same basis, it is obvious that it would become much closer to what is now termed a civil partnership. It would not be, *of its nature*, oriented to procreation; and it is not clear why it should require any sexual activity at all for validity. Indeed, one could argue that (apart from a concern for the welfare of any resulting children), it is not the State's business to enquire into the sexual

relationships of citizens, as long as they are consensual, still less as to the love they may have for one another.

If the Government wishes to ensure equality for same-sex and different-sex couples in respect of the legal and civil consequences at present following from Marriage, and to a great extent from civil partnerships, would it not make more sense simply to open civil partnerships to both types of couple, avoiding the term “marriage” altogether, and to leave Marriage to be defined by various religions according to their own beliefs, and to popular usage? Jews, Muslims etc. could (as now) be married according to their own rites, and even secularists and humanists could devise whatever rites they wished to give public testimony to their relationships. In themselves, none of these rites would have any *legal* effect, which would only be achieved through civil partnership. It might be that some would still wish the Marriage Service of the Church of England to have, of itself, the effect of establishing a civil partnership; but in my view this would best be avoided. I also think that the modern language Marriage Service of the BCW should be revised to make it more clearly express the doctrine of the BCP, and so avoid ambiguity.

Fr Paul Spilsbury