Prayer Diary

April 2019

Being Easter People

There is no joy like the joy of Easter. It is good news for the whole world, the whole cosmos. There is perhaps no finer expression of this than the Paschal Homily of St John of Chrysostom, read aloud every Easter morning in the Orthodox Church. It is good news precisely because it is not escapist. It is not some kind of chocolate and bunnies sentimental temporary escape from reality. It is good news precisely because it embraces and transfigures the suffering of the whole world, the groanings of creation (Rom. 8:22) and our own “inner groanings”, wounds and struggles.

But the road to redemption cannot bypass the Cross. There is no Easter without Good Friday. To be an “Easter people” - which we are - we are those who in some sense experience the dying and rising of Christ in our own lives. Paul reminds us that we are baptised into his death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3). Paul writes “I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20). Jesus calls us to lose our lives in order to find them. We are to take up our Cross daily.

Christians are to be those who are practised in dying. Bonhoeffer wrote: “When Jesus calls us, he bids us come and die.” It is in this dying, we discover the power of the resurrection, his life in us, that in “dying, we live”. (2 Cor. 6:9)

It is in and through this that we can witness that Christ is risen, good news for each of us personally, and for the whole world for which Christ died.

Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

BCDM provides training for all

BCDM (the Bishop’s Certificate in Discipleship and Mission) is now in its fourth year and is going from strength to strength. During the first week of term in January 2019 over 100 people attended BCDM modules across the diocese. Headed up by Katherine Walakira, the Diocesan Discipleship and Mission Development Adviser, and supported by a talented team of ordained and lay people, 2019 is set to be another exciting year for BCDM.

BCDM was formed in 2015 to equip and empower everyday Christians to recognise their call to be missionary disciples in their daily lives. Prior to 2015, lay training in the diocese was largely aimed at training for accredited positions in the Church, such as an authorised lay minister or Readers. The Diocesan Training Partnership became aware that this left out the majority of the congregation and raised the question “how does God call the whole of His Church.” Since 2015 lay training has been a key priority for the diocese and the popularity of BCDM has demonstrated the enthusiasm for learning amongst lay people.

Developing healthy churches through the 8 Essential Qualities defined by the Natural Church Development is the core strategy of the diocese. BCDM responds to the results of the Healthy Churches survey by running modules designed to build up the essential qualities in churches where there is a need. These modules are run by the Serving Christ Learning Mentors and include; Needs-based Evangelism, Discovering and Using Our Spiritual Gifts and Leading Worship Services.

Over the last four years, more than 600 participants from a wide range of backgrounds and church traditions have taken a BCDM module. Many of those 600 have taken more than one, and some have completed certificates and have become licensed as Readers. BCDM is open to all, whether you are exploring training for an accredited position or you just want to learn more about your faith and make new friends. There are options to go deeper in your learning by completing assignments to work towards certificates. Also if you are looking at becoming a Reader, BCDM is the place to start.

To find out more about BCDM, go to the BCDM pages of the Diocesan website— www.dioceseofcoventry.org/BCDM
Cycle of Prayer - April 2019
With a focus on parishes and schools in Coventry South Deanery

**Mon 1**
April is National Pet Month. National Pet Month aims to educate the public on responsible pet ownership, celebrates the benefits of having pets and increases public awareness about the role of pet care specialists. We give thanks for all those who care for and look after God’s creatures.

*Frederick Denison Maurice, Priest, Teacher of the Faith, 1872*

**Tue 2**
Today is World Autism Awareness Day. The aim of the day is to help people understand how overwhelming the world can be for people with autism. Pray that people will be kinder to families living with autism, and that these families would feel less isolated.

**Wed 3**
Coventry St Mary Magdalen. Clergy: Dwayne Engh. Please pray for God’s blessing on the mission and ministry of this parish, giving thanks for their work as an official Inclusive Church and Visible Congregation. We pray for an increase in discipleship and depth of spirituality - and for God’s guidance as we reach out to serve the community of Chapelfields.

**Thu 4**
From the 22nd March to the 23rd April, the #GBSpringClean campaign is encouraging people across Britain to help improve the environment on their doorstep by collecting and safely disposing single-use plastic from streets, parks, beaches and more. We pray for people to get involved with this. We pray for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).

**Fri 5**
Cheylesmore. Clergy: Arthur Woo. Readers: John Scattergood, Margaret East, Tony Price. We thank God for amazing turnout for our first Messy Church and continued passion for Christ from our youth discipled by our Pais interns. Please pray for our plans for a young adults group at Christ Church, and how our buildings might be better used for mission.

**Sat 6**
We pray for all parishes that are currently experiencing a vacancy. We pray for the appointment processes, that the right ministers will be found to lead these parishes forward. We also pray for the new opportunities in lay ministry during the vacancy.

**Sun 7**
Today is World Health Day, and the focus for 2019 is "Universal health coverage". Millions of people have no access at all to healthcare. Millions more are forced to choose between health care and other daily expenses such as food, clothing and even a home. We pray that universal health coverage for all will become a reality in the near future.

**Mon 8**
Allesley Park and Whoberley. Clergy: Andy March. Reader: Nic Thorpe. We thank God for growth of children’s and youth work, and for a wonderful Confirmation celebration in October. Please pray for plans to celebrate the 60th birthday of the church; that they would be opportunities for building community and for mission; and for plans to redevelop the church hall.

**Tue 9**
April is Bowel Cancer Awareness month. We pray for all those affected by bowel cancer, the medical professionals who care for them, and for all those who are carrying out research, looking for better treatments.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran Pastor, Martyr, 1945*

**Wed 10**
Today Bishop Christopher, as Patron of the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, will be chairing their AGM. We give thanks for all the work the centre does in the city and pray God’s blessing upon it.

*William Law, Priest, Spiritual Writer, 1761*  
*William of Ockham, Friar, Philosopher, Teacher of the Faith, 1347*

**Thu 11**
We pray for all who work at the Diocesan Offices under the leadership of the Diocesan Secretary, Ruth Marlow. We pray for God’s guidance as they seek to serve and equip the whole of the Diocese of Coventry. We pray for the Bishop’s Core and Extended Staff teams which meet today.

*George Augustus Selwyn, first Bishop of New Zealand, 1878*

**Fri 12**
April is Stress Awareness Month, when health care professionals and experts seek to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for the problem of stress. We pray for all those affected by stress at this time and for those who seek to support them.

**Sat 13**
Earlsdon. Clergy: Tulo Raistrick. We thank God for the response to the daily devotional series being followed by church members, and for the growth in numbers attending services. Please pray for our Youth Alpha group, and for our pastoral care of those who are housebound and unwell. We pray for the Bishop’s Council which meets today.

**Sun 14**
We pray for the keeping of Holy Week at churches in our diocese; that the rhythms of prayer and devotion may seep into the daily lives of all those who attend. We also pray for Bishop Christopher who will be leading the Palm Sunday service at St Gregory’s Church in Offchurch.

**Mon 15**
We pray for Bishop John who will be leading services at St Mary’s, Warwick during Holy Week and Easter, including a Eucharist and Confirmation Service on Saturday 20th. We pray for all those attending the services and the candidates being confirmed. We pray that their faith will be broadened as they go out in the Spirit.
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| Tile Hill. Clergy: Interregnum. We pray for God’s blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
*Isabella Gilmore, Deaconess, 1923 | St James Styvechale. Clergy: Josh Maynard, Anne Richardson. Reader: Barbara Carr. Ordinand: Rachel King. Acceler8 Worker: Jonny Dant. Children and Families Worker: Izzy Pamley. Thank God for development of schools work in the parish. Please pray for our vision focus for 2019 ‘draw near’, that we would grow in our passion for God and particularly our worship. | Westwood and Canley. Clergy: David Hammond, Sarah Ashelby. We thank God for continuing growth in both churches including people coming to faith, new Missional Communities and a growing team. Please pray for St John’s as we regather after renewing our entrance & toilets and at St Stephen’s for sustained growth and deepening disciplship. | "When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died; my richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride." As we remember Jesus’ obedience, even to death on a cross, we ask God to meet us in our brokenness and need and make us obedient to him.  
*Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1012 | We pray for all those who are waiting. We remember those who are expecting good news today, of a birth or a reason to celebrate. We pray too for those who are waiting for the unknown and for those who will receive sad or difficult news today. | He has risen - Jesus is alive! We pray for Easter celebrations in all parishes and communities this morning. We pray for those who will gather with Bishop Christopher at the Cathedral for the Easter Dawn service of Baptism and Confirmation followed by the first Eucharist of Easter.  
*Anselm, Abbot of Le Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1109 | Eastern Green. Clergy: Greg Smith, Phil Richardson. Readers: Sue Masters, Lesley Lee. We thank God for renewing our worship life and the success of Forget me Not (our Dementia Support Group). We pray for our church plant, St Andy’s, as it moves towards being more self-sustaining and as it seeks a permanent home for its congregation. | April is International Caesarean Awareness Month. One in four babies born in the UK is delivered by a caesarean section. Caesareans can be life-saving interventions for women and babies when complications occur. We pray for the medical teams who carry out caesareans and we pray for healing for women who have caesareans. |
| Tue 16              | Wed 17                | Thu 18               | Fri 19               | Sat 20                 | Sun 21                 | Mon 22                | Tue 23                |
|                       |                       |                      |                      |                       |                       |                       |                      |
| Wed 24              | Thu 25                | Fri 26               | Sat 27               | Sun 28                 | Mon 29                 | Tue 30                |
| This week is MS Awareness Week. We pray for the Multiple Sclerosis Trust, who are working with health professionals across the UK to develop ways of helping MS teams deliver the best possible care to everyone affected by MS.  
*Mellitus, Bishop of London, first Bishop at St Paul’s, 624 | Fletchamstead. Clergy: Stephen Burch. Readers: William Arden, Helen Kearney, Tim Pollard, Ann Lancaster. We thank God for further growth in young adults & young families and for new Life groups. We are excited by regular encounters with God’s presence in worship and the use of gifts and testimony. Please pray for more growth and clear effective structures. | At this time of renewal we thank God for all that he gives us, particularly for creation, which continues to sustain and delight us. We give thanks for the colours, sights, smells and sounds of spring, for the song of birds, the call of lambs in the fields, new growth emerging from the earth and everything that means new life, we thank you Lord. | Finham St Martin. Clergy: Matt Taylor. Reader: Andrew Barclay. We pray for God’s blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
*Christina Rossetti, Poet, 1894 | We pray that congregations would be free to continue to celebrate Easter in their worship gatherings today. We pray for anyone who feels lonely or on the edge of their church and ask that God would help us to be more welcoming and caring towards others.  
*Peter Chanel, Missionary in the South Pacific, Martyr, 1841 | We pray for God’s blessing upon the pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community. We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee which meets today.  
*Catherine of Siena, Teacher of the Faith, 1380 | St Laurence's Primary School, Coventry. Headteacher: Michelle Cuskelley. We pray for God’s blessinging upon pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community. We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee which meets today.  
*Catherine of Siena, Teacher of the Faith, 1380 | We thank God for our brothers and sisters who serve and worship in other Christian denominations. We ask God for new opportunities to work together ecumenically to help transform our local communities. We pray for the Diocesan Audit Committee which meets today.  
*Pandita Mary Ramabai, Translator of the Scriptures, 1922 |
All welcome at St Mary Magdalen

The last couple of years have been a tumultuous time in the UK and our public life seems to be more divisive than ever. All of us have a duty to take a stand against racism and prejudice, wherever we encounter it.

So, we are proud to say that all are welcome here at St Mary Magdalen’s and to explicitly work for inclusion. This goes beyond welcome, to not only tolerate but to include at such a level as to allow everyone’s unique contribution to change and renew our community. We will continue to do everything we can to welcome, include and affirm everyone within our extended family here at St Mary Magdalen Church.

That includes some new ministries such as our pub ministry (called ‘Pint of View’), which aims to provide a place for discussion about big life questions in a relaxed setting (with a pint or two); our new Dementia-Friendly Church Service with coffee and cake; and our new contemplative contemporary worship service (called ‘Refuge’). It also includes our children’s ministries that have been in place for a number of years, including our ‘Jolly Tots’ toddlers’ midweek group, our ‘Diddy Disciples’ Sunday School and, of course, ‘Messy Church’.

We are very grateful for the support of the Coventry South Deanery and the Diocese that allows us to serve our community of Chapelfields. We ask for your prayers as we continue serving our parish and wider community.

Rvd Dwayne Engh
Priest at St Mary Magdalen

An introduction to Primary Schools

As the part-time children and family worker at St Martin’s, Coventry, I have learned that through continual prayer, doors have been opened in our local primary schools. September 2018 was a great start for just that. I began the year with Psalm 78:2-4:

“I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—stories we have heard and known, stories our ancestors handed down to us. We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders”. New Living Translation (NLT)

We have been presenting “Christmas Unwrapped” and “Easter Cracked” sessions to our local primary schools. The children arrived not knowing anything about church - what an opportunity to share the message of God’s love! We used our gifts to introduce God to the children through quizzes, fact finding, and even an over-the-top rap wearing a silly wig and speaking in a weird accent. We aimed to cater for each child’s unique learning style. However, we felt that we could do more...

We met the headteacher of one of the schools to discuss how we could deliver the Christian point of view during RE lessons and monthly assemblies. They agreed we could come in and the first assembly went really well. To see 100+ children laughing at a Giant Goliath in a bed sheet and singing “God Loves Me” at full voice and knowing that he really does love each one of us is amazing. Also during RE lessons we shared cake with year 5 pupils and helped explain to them how God came into existence which was challenging but fun!

How to go about engaging with schools? Through prayer, Bible stories, personal testimonies, sharing cake and, most importantly, by sharing God’s truths we develop followers for the future.

We pray: Father God, help us to see how we can communicate with the primary schools in our community and what path you have for our children’s work at St Martin’s. Help us to be honest with each other and listen to each other as we wait to hear what you call us to do. Give us the knowledge we need to shine your light and for it to reach the lives of the children whom we meet. Help us today and every day to focus on you and to share your message with the children, our next generation. For your Glory. Amen.

Kate Saxon