



THE WHITE ROSE

The Parish Newsletter of Old Saint Paul's Church

April - May 2017

Easter and Equal Marriage

Easter, in the English language, borrows its name from a pagan goddess and her spring-time festival of new life and growth. In other European languages the festival of Christ's Resurrection takes its name from its Jewish origins - Paques (French), Pääsiäinen (Finnish), Pasqua (Italian) - meaning 'Passover.' Whether you call it Easter or Passover, it is a day and a season of new life in Christ.

New life in the Church takes many forms. Our faith has been developing over long centuries, and the word 'tradition' describes what the process by which newness has come. New life comes slowly as much as it comes rapidly, but being a Christian involves finding new life in both.

The acceptance of same-sex relationships and marriage in the Church is an example of new life that seems too slow to some, especially LGBTI people whose lives are directly affected, and too fast to others, usually those who are worried that marriage itself is changing.

For several years now the Scottish Episcopal Church has been in the process of considering a change to our rules about Marriage. This is because Same-Sex Marriage is now recognised in law, and we need to decide whether such marriages can be solemnised in our churches. The final decision will be made at General Synod this June, and if it is Yes, then same-sex couples can ask to be married in church, just as opposite-sex couples can.

Many people have worked for this change in order to support LGBTI people in the church. But not every member of the Episcopal Church, of the Anglican Communion, or of Old S. Paul's, would feel able to agree with this change. This is why our church law, if passed, would say that there are different understandings of marriage in the church, that no priest will have to solemnise a wedding against their conscience, and that all members of the church, whatever their view, must be valued and respected.

The diversity of views in the church led the Episcopal Church to set up meetings for conversation at which people have been courageous and open in expressing and listening to the diversity of views. A number of OSP members took part in one such meeting in 2015, which they found very positive, whatever their view. Now there is to be another, an open conversation for all members of OSP congregation, after mass on Sunday 7th May, with a simple lunch provided. The aim of the meeting is to learn from each other's experiences and understandings, not to try and persuade others of our own view. People will be invited to listen to each other with

respect and gentleness, and to 'walk with each other' even if we find we have to disagree on the possibility of change.

With other members of OSP, you are warmly invited to the meeting on Sunday 7th May and be part of the conversation. It will assist planning for the event if you could let us know at office@osp.org.uk if you can come.

May it's Easter or Passover in your language, may the Resurrection bring you new life, both slowly and rapidly.

Fr Ian

Holy Week and Easter at Old Saint Paul's

Palm Sunday 9 April

10.30am Palm Procession and High Mass
with sung Passion

2.00pm 'Jesus on the Royal Mile'

Ecumenical Procession from Mercat Cross to Holyrood.

Monday 10 April

7.30pm Holy Week Liturgy at Saint Patrick's RC Church,
Cowgate

Wednesday 12 April

7.30pm Tenebrae - traditional liturgy (joined by other
churches)

Maundy Thursday 13 April

7.30pm Mass of the Last Supper
with Footwashing & Watch

Good Friday 14 April

12.00 Three Hours Service
including

1.30pm Liturgy of the Passion

7.30pm Good Friday Service at Canongate CofS Church

Easter Sunday 16 April

5.00am The Easter Vigil

8.00am Mass

10.30am High Mass

6.30pm Solemn Evensong

The L'Arche Community

Recently a few of us from the L'Arche Community in Edinburgh were invited to give one of the "First Sunday" talks at Old St Paul's and Jenny has asked me to write a little more about it for The White Rose.

Many of you will know from the writings of Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen something of the founding story of L'Arche, how it began, almost it seems by accident, in a little village in northern France in the early 1960s. Jean, a son of the last Governor-General of Canada, joined the British navy during the war, then after the war became a student of philosophy and an academic, teaching in universities in Toronto and Paris. He felt he was being called by God in some way, but how, where or to what was unclear. In this uncertainty, a close friend suggested he might make a start by visiting the long-stay patients in a large psychiatric hospital nearby, many of whom had learning disabilities rather than being ill. Jean eventually became good friends with 3 men who had learning disabilities. The hospital seemed no place for

them to spend their lives and so, as he says, on impulse he invited them to come and live with him in his home in the village of Trosly-Breuil. They accepted his invitation. It wasn't right for one of them and he left but Rafael and Philippe stayed on and together with Jean became the unintentional founders of L'Arche; unintentional, because none of them had any idea of doing anything other than make a home to share their lives with one another.

For Jean, the reality of their shared life came as a shock to all his notions of himself. He had assumed he would be the one in charge, that he would provide for and manage an ordered and well-organised existence for them all. In reality, Rafael and Philippe had their own ideas about the life they wanted and their own way of going about achieving it. Gradually Jean learned that a truly shared life can only be based on mutuality and this, he understood, was the greatest gift they brought him.

Their experience inspired many

friends of different nationalities and backgrounds who visited the little house and as a result similar communities began to spring up in other places, first in Canada and the UK, and then in India. In a matter of a few years, L'Arche developed from being very small, very French and very Roman Catholic to being widespread, international, interdenominational and eventually inter-faith. L'Arche communities now number about 150 in 38 different countries all round the world, from New Zealand to Japan to Bangladesh to Haiti. In each of these communities we find the same key experience of profound mutual relationships and a valuing of the gifts that each person brings.

The Community in Edinburgh had its beginnings in the 1980s when Jean Vanier came to meet friends in the Community of the Transfiguration in Roslin and to speak at the Queen's Hall. Some of us, inspired by the idea of a L'Arche community here, formed a "seed group" and in 1991 our first house opened in Leith. I remember going to Gogarburn to meet people who might want to come out of hospital to live in L'Arche and I still regularly see one of those who did. These days he lives in one of our supported flats near his old house. The Edinburgh Community now consists of three houses, one of which opened only a couple of years ago and is specifically designed for the needs of people with learning difficulties who are aging and in some cases developing dementia, and in addition four flats, which offer more independent living for those who wish it but wish also to remain members of the Community. People with learning disabilities (or "core members", as they are known in L'Arche) live in the houses alongside assistants, sharing their lives. Our assistants, who are both British and international, come initially for one



Sian and Ally on holiday



year, though many stay longer and some may decide to spend their lives in the Community. Core members know that they have a home for life if they wish it and most do, sometimes moving to another house or to a supported flat, if that's what they want and if it's possible.

In each of our three houses there are four core members and four live-in assistants but as more support is needed, an increasing number of assistants live outside the houses. When I became an assistant, I was one of the first to live (or at least to sleep, because that was all it amounted to!) in my own flat. And it is a challenge, as the number of live-out assistants increases with the needs of the core members, to continue to value and cherish the sense of community that is at the heart of L'Arche. It is also, in the UK, a challenge to balance the pressure to meet all the local authority requirements with remaining faithful to our deepest values of mutual relationships, friendship and love. I have just been to the AGM of L'Arche UK and this is probably the single greatest challenge that we are facing at present.

A related issue, of course, is that of funding. Here, as in France, our chief funder is the government. We fundraise for capital expenditure, such as the house we recently built in Edinburgh for older people (and incidentally, we are grateful to the OSP members who contributed to that) but for our day to day living we are dependent on what is becoming an increasingly uncertain source of revenue and it seems likely that soon we will have to raise much more to meet our day-to-day needs.

I was in Chennai in South India a couple of years ago, staying in one of the little L'Arche houses there. Friends in the university asked me why, when there are so many people in need, the communities of L'Arche remain so small; shouldn't they be providing help to as many people as possible? It was a particularly acute question in India but it is asked



Stations of the Cross on Leith Links

elsewhere as well. And the only answer is that L'Arche has never set out to be a problem solver for society; its special calling is to celebrate the gifts of people with learning disabilities. I do believe it has been one of the pointers directing society to learn and value those who seemed marginal but it has only been able to do that through the small-scale kind of living that enables deep and mutual relationships to flourish. Mutuality is at the heart of L'Arche. One of the most powerful ways in which I have experienced this mutuality is in the support I have been given by friends with learning disabilities, particularly when my faith has been even more fragile than usual. Being still beside someone who doesn't communicate in words but knows how to enter into deep silence in prayer is more helpful than a thousand theological arguments. Every year on Maundy Thursday in every L'Arche community all over the world we remember the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Because we come from many different faith traditions or indeed in some cases from none, we are not able to share Communion, so the foot-washing has become our shared liturgy. I truly love the Maundy Thursday liturgy at Old St Paul's, its richness and elegant formal beauty,

but I also love the slightly chaotic and occasionally noisy celebration in our L'Arche Community in Leith. We eat a meal together, then we move to sit in small groups and watch as the story is acted out by members of one of the houses, we sing, and then we kneel in our little group to wash one another's feet and to be blessed. It's a powerful reminder of the physical and spiritual intimacy of our life of caring for one another.

One of the questions we were asked after our talk was – how can members of OSP who are interested help the work of L'Arche? Ally Mooney made a very practical suggestion: many of our first-year assistants are strangers to Edinburgh and would love to get to know people in the city and feel more at home. If anyone would like to do this, we could easily put you in touch with new assistants and that would be very helpful as a support both to the individual assistant and the Community. And the other is, I guess, the perennial cry of charities – please send us a committee member! Do get in touch if you might be interested. My email is

h.reidthomas@gmail.com.

Helen Reid-Thomas

Calendar and Lectionary April-May 2017

April 2–FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Readings at 8 am Mass:

Ezekiel 37.1-14; Psalm 130; John 11.1-45

Readings at 10.30 am Mass:

Genesis 1.26-31a; Ps 104.24-35; Matthew 6.25-33

Readings at Evening prayer:

Isaiah 43.16-21; John 12.1-8

April 9–6TH SUNDAY OF LENT (PALM SUNDAY)

Readings at Mass:

Matthew 21.1-11; Isaiah 50.4-9a; Psalm 31.9-16;
Philippians 2.5-11; Matthew 27.11-54

Readings at Evening prayer:

Zechariah 12.9-11; 13.1,7-9; Matthew 21.12-17

April 13–MAUNDY THURSDAY

Readings at Mass:

Exodus 12.1-14; Psalm 116.1-2,12-19; 1 Corinthians
11.23-26; John 13.1-17,31b-35; Matthew 26.30-75

April 14–GOOD FRIDAY

Readings at the Liturgy:

Isaiah 52.13–53.12; Psalm 22;
Hebrews 4.14-16; 5.7-9; John 18.1–19.42

April 16–EASTER DAY

Readings at the Vigil Mass:

Genesis 1.1–2.4a; Exodus 14.10-31;5.20-21;
Ezekiel 36.24-28; Romans 6.3-11;
Psalm 114; Matthew 28.1-10

Readings at Mass of the Day:

Acts 10.34-43; Psalm 118.1-2,14-24;
Colossians 3.1-4; John 20.1-18

Readings at Evensong:

Isaiah 51.9-11; John 20.19-23

April 23–SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings at Mass:

Acts 2.14a,22-32; Psalm 16
1 Peter 1.3-9; John 20.19-31

Readings at Evensong:

Isaiah 43.8-15; John 14.1-7

Weekday observances:

Tue 25–Saint Mark, Evangelist;
Wed 26–Albert Ernest Laurie, priest, 1937;
Sat 29–Catherine of Siena, mystic and teacher, 1380

April 30–THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings at Mass:

Acts 2.14a,36-41; Psalm 116.1-4,12-19
1 Peter 1.17-23; Luke 24.13-35

Readings at Evensong (Eve of Saints Philip & James)

Isaiah 40.27-31; James 1.1-12

Weekday observances:

Mon 1–Saints Philip and James, Apostles;
Tue 2–Athanasius, bishop and teacher, 373

May 7–FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings at Mass:

Acts 2.42-47; Ps 23; 1 Peter 2.19-21; John 10.1-10

Readings at Evensong

Ezekiel 34.1-10; John 10.11-18

Weekday observances:

Mon 8–Julian of Norwich, c.1413;
Fri 12–Thomas Rattray, bishop, 1743

May 14–FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings at Mass:

Acts 7.55-60; Psalm 31.1-5,15-16;
1 Peter 2.2-10; John 14.1-14

Readings at Evensong (Eve of Saint Matthias)

Isaiah 22.15-22; Acts 2.37-47

Weekday observances:

Mon 15–Saint Matthias the Apostle

May 21–SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings at Mass:

Acts 17.22-31; Psalm 66.8-20;
1 Peter 3.13-22; John 14.15-21

Readings at Evensong

Isaiah 55.1-11; John 15.9-17

Weekday observances:

Mon-Wed–Rogation Days of prayer for the fruits
of human labour; Tue 23–William of Perth, 1201

May 25–THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Readings at Mass:

Acts 1.1-11; Psalm 47;
Ephesians 1.15-23; Luke 24.44-53

Weekday observances:

Fri 26–Augustine of Canterbury, bishop, c 604

May 28–SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings at Mass:

Acts 1.6-14; Psalm 68.1-10,32-35;
1 Peter 4.12-14;5.6-11; John 17.1-11

Readings at Evensong

Ezekiel 36.24-28; John 17.6-19

Weekday observances:

Wed 31–The Visit of Mary to Elizabeth; Thu 1–
Justin of Rome, martyr, 165; Sat 3–Charles Lwanga
and companions, 1886; Janani Luwum, bishop, 1977;
martyrs of Uganda



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