



Anglican Catholic Church



Diocese of the United Kingdom

Catholic Faith † Orthodox Worship † Apostolic Order

April 2021

My dear friends and colleagues,

The tomb was empty. All four Gospels testify to this, though (very reassuringly) they have a varying take on the details. Any police officer could tell you the differing stories of four witnesses to the same traffic accident. But the accident did happen, all four agree. And the tomb was empty, all four agree.

What happened next? Well Jesus started appearing to various people. And it is interesting and instructive to note those he did *not* appear to.

Not Pilate, not Herod, not the Romans, not the Pharisees and priests of the Temple.

No, he appeared alive to the Apostles, to Mary Magdalen, to his Mother, to a couple of disheartened disciples, then to several hundred of them at once.

What was the difference? Well, why *would* he appear to the first lot I mentioned – Pilate, Herod, the Romans, the Pharisees and priests? Just to convince them that his claims were true? He could have done that by coming down from the Cross when they taunted him. Or indeed when the Devil tempted him in the desert to throw himself from the temple tower to be seen to be caught by angels. This would certainly have convinced them he was something special.

But Jesus only appeared to those who loved him already, without the Resurrection. They loved him for his words of life, his love of sinners, his total trust in God his Father, his contempt for hypocrisy, his freedom from prejudice. They loved Him out of *faith*, not *proof*.

Those who loved Jesus had been left in a state of shock by the seeming disaster of the Crucifixion. And it was only to those who loved him that he appeared. Because only they could understand what he had done.

And it is only to those who love him today that he appears – to you and me. The Resurrection *proves* nothing for us. It doesn't have to. It is just the logical and satisfying outcome of all that God has ever done, from Creation to the life and death of Jesus. We don't love him because he rose from the dead; we don't love him because he promises us everlasting life. We love him because we see in him infinite goodness, total trustworthiness, someone worth dying for. And of course, someone worth living for.

Dame Julian of Norwich had a vision of all Creation being like a hazelnut in the hand of God. And *she* had no idea that the universe contains billions of galaxies like our own, and that a galaxy contains billions of stars. The God who created that is waiting for miniscule you and me on the other side of the great divide. Our lives will, of course, end on this planet but they will continue within the life of God on a different plane.

A happy and blessed Resurrection Day to you all.

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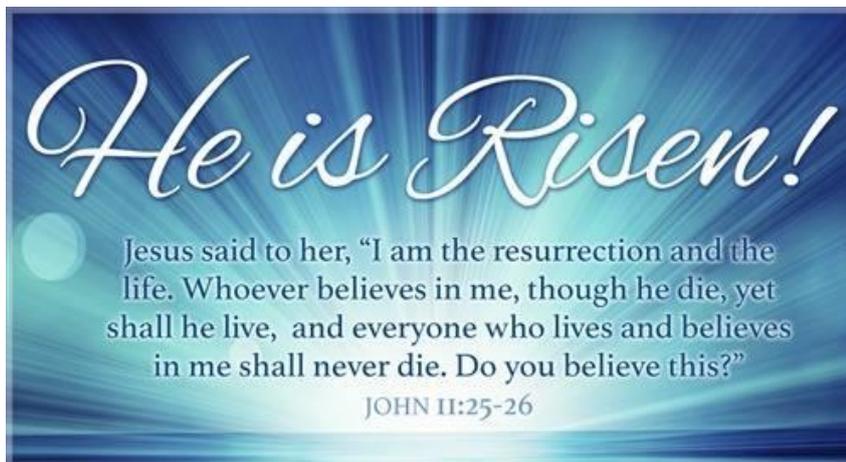
From the Archdeacon's desk

Evidence in action

Winter seems to have been a long one this year, with lots of cold, snowy and unusually wet weather. Those of us who try to keep on top of some sort of programme with the gardening will have found it rather frustrating at times. Also, the preoccupation with protecting ourselves, each other, and the National Health Service from the ravages of the Coronavirus, the pressure on vaccinating everyone as soon as possible and with getting back on track with our education system, industry, commerce, and hospitality, have been an endless source of concern and logistical calculation. There seems to be far more bad news than good, not only in the UK but all around the world. But as we look out of the window and can see the daffodils in bloom, their brilliant yellow trumpets lighting up our gardens and roadsides, they are reminding us that spring is upon us, and that better days are ahead.

At the beginning of April we will be celebrating again the Resurrection, and remembering once more how the joy and hope of Easter came after the sorrow and despair of the events of Good Friday. In the early church Easter was the time when the new converts to the faith were baptised and accepted into the congregation. It was a time when entry into the new life in Christ brought new hope and great joy into lives which were often sad and impoverished. Being a member of the early church often brought suffering through persecution though, and many members were tortured and even put to death because of their acceptance of Christ, and their determination to follow Him and the way of living that He proclaimed. The presence of a living faith gave them great courage, and a peace and strength of character that was envied by those amongst whom they lived. Many more were brought to the faith by the example that they gave, and by the special quality that shone through in the way that they loved those around them.

As we live in a world that seems to be increasingly beset with problems and unhappiness we should remember the examples of those early Christians who brought hope to the world during dark and sad times. It may be necessary to re-examine our own faith. Perhaps we have grown stale, and not maintained a real and living relationship with our Lord so that we have lost the joy and enthusiasm for the Gospel Life that He proclaimed. As, over the next few weeks, we move forward through Eastertide to Pentecost let us seek to renew our relationship with Christ, and prepare ourselves to seek and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are the disciples for this generation, there's no getting away from that, so let us commit ourselves again to service as true and faithful servants of the Lord, bringing not only knowledge but *evidence* of the love of God to our communities.



(My "desk picture" shows an Isle of Sheppey scene viewed from my desk, from the garden, or within a few minutes of it.)