

# **St Mary's Parish Magazine**



**March - April 2021**

**50p**

## ***Editor's notes***

At the time of 'going to press' it was not clear whether we would have a chance to celebrate Easter in church as we had been able to do at Christmas. For many back in December it was thought that whilst Christmas celebrations would be somewhat low key, we would be taking the opportunity of making Easter the new Christmas for 2021. But it doesn't look as if our hopes will come to fruition.

Nevertheless, Easter is a most joyous time in Christendom. It is the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah. It is a time when we reflect upon the truth of the Gospel – that Christ died for our sins and rose from the dead. Although we see Easter only one time in the King James Bible (Acts 12:4), truly it is synonymous with the Resurrection. The Resurrection is proof that Jesus had victory over death and that everyone who believes in what He did on that cross will also live life eternal.

May you and yours have a blessed and happy Easter!

***Tony King***

## **Contents**

- 3 Reflections from the Rectory**  
Vaughan reflects on the relationship between science and religion
- 4 Cathedral Service**  
A salutary poem
- 5 Palm Sunday**  
Steve Roud highlights a time for celebration
- 7 Maundy Thursday**  
The tradition of another day in Holy Week
- 9 A Morning Wish**  
A belated hope for a new year
- 10 Facebook For Seniors**  
Try this if you haven't got a computer
- 10 Easter Eggs**  
An traditional Easter song from Russia
- 11 A Broken Chrysalis**  
An inspirational short story for Easter
- 12 Never A Crossword**  
Our regular brain teaser with mainly religious themes
- 13 Thought For Food**  
A simple but tasty dish for two
- 14 Hot Cross Buns**  
Everyone's favourite!
- 15 And Finally .....**  
Quiz results, crossword answers and other important things



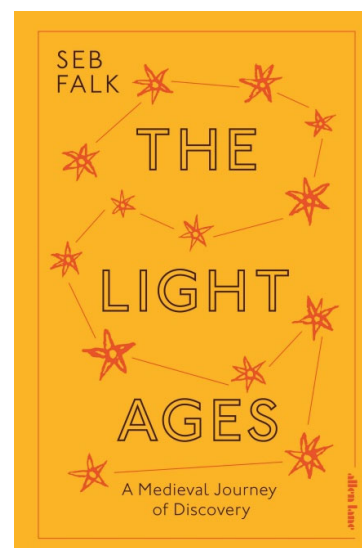
### Footnote:

Copies of the magazine can be posted to your home or friends and relations. Subscription rates are £6.50 for a year (6 editions), including postage. Please contact the Parish Office.

# REFLECTIONS FROM THE RECTORY

## LIGHT?

In the mid Noughties Seb Falk sang on the back row of St Mary's Choir and taught history at Warwick School. He was also very helpful in establishing the annual Lent Addresses in church. Seb then moved to the University of Cambridge where he now teaches in the Faculty of History and has just published a well-received book entitled *The Light Ages: A Medieval Journey of Discovery* (Allen Lane, 2020).



## DARK?

In essence, he argues that understanding the so-called Dark Ages to be characterized by religious superstition and scientific ignorance is a complete misunderstanding of that era. Rather we should see this period as a time when many human beings were fascinated by the movement of the sun and moon, earth and planets, and were determined to understand better how they worked. This was achieved by painstaking observation, detailed data collection and technical experimentation – particularly with instruments to measure the course of the heavens. Much of this was done by people of faith in monasteries and laid down the basis of scientific methods for later generations.

## HOPE ...

To see science and religion as necessarily conflicted or mutually exclusive is a modern and misguided telling of this story. It's important to understand the roots of both and how they relate to each other. Seb's volume is very helpful in this respect and we can see some of the lasting impact around us in small and large ways. For instance, as we journey into Lent we're moving from the solar calendar (which dates Christmas) into the lunar calendar (which dates Easter). More importantly in 2021 we're beginning to see the roll-out of vaccines to combat COVID 19, which is a triumph of scientific method that's grounded in (amongst other things) the work of monks during the Light Ages.

Sadly because of the pandemic there will be no Lent Addresses in 2021, so if you're looking for some stimulating Lenten reading, I do recommend Seb's book.

# CATHEDRAL SERVICE

I'm only here because I wandered in  
Not knowing that a service would begin,  
And had to slide into the nearest pew,  
Pretending it was what I'd meant to do.

The tall candles cast their frail light  
Upon the priest, the choir clad in white,  
The carved and polished and embroidered scene.  
The congregation numbers seventeen.

And awkwardly I follow as I'm led  
To kneel or stand or sing or bow in head.  
Though these specific rites are strange to me,  
I know their larger meaning perfectly –

The heritage of twenty centuries  
Is symbolised in rituals like these,  
In special modes of beauty and of grace  
Enacted in a certain kind of place.

This faith, although I lack it, is my own,  
Inherent to the marrow of the bone.  
To this even the unbelieving mind  
Submits its unbelief to be defined.

Perhaps the meagre congregation shows  
How all of that is drawing to a close,  
And remnants only, come here to entreat  
These dying flickers of the obsolete.

Yet when did this religion ever rest  
On weight of numbers as the final test?  
Its founder said that it was all the same  
When two or three were gathered in his name.

*Peter Kocan*

# PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday is the sixth Sunday in Lent, the start of Holy Week, and can fall anywhere between 15 March and 18 April. It commemorates Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on an ass, when crowds spontaneously gathered to welcome him with branches of palm trees. By the Middle Ages, the day was celebrated with elaborate ritual: palms were gathered beforehand, blessed in church, and then waved or strewn in front of a procession of clergy, which could include a wooden donkey on wheels or a picture of Christ riding one. Churches were decorated, and the day was one of joyful celebration, which contrasted markedly with the congregation's deepening gloom as Good Friday approached. At the Reformation, Palm Sunday celebrations were so entrenched that they escaped the reformers' zeal for a while, and in the 1530s were specifically named as one of the few ceremonies to be spared the axe; however in 1549 they were suppressed under Edward VI, then reprieved by Mary, and banned again by Elizabeth in 1559. In Catholic countries, and in Catholic churches in Britain, the day continued to be celebrated with palm-bearing processions, and this probably helped to keep the original attributes of the day in the public's mind, even while the established Church took no official notice.

The key feature of the many secular Palm Sunday customs reported from most parts of the country in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were trips to the countryside, called 'going a-palming' or something similar, to collect catkins, flowers, or other plants, in order to decorate the house or church, make crosses out of them, and wear pieces in buttonholes for the day. The problem for English people has always been that palms do not grow here, and so other plants have traditionally been used instead. Box, cypress, hazel, yew and willow are mentioned in early records, but the plant that many held in particular affection was the 'pussy willow', with its attractive catkins:

*We always went out for our Sunday walk, the whole family. Mother liked to take home some pussy-willow, especially for Palm Sunday. Father used to tell us a little rhyme that went: 'I have a little pussy, Her coat is silver grey, I found her in the meadow, Not very far away, My little silver pussy, Will never be a cat, 'Cause she's a pussy-willow, Now what do you think of that?'*

However, the collecting of plants for decoration was not always so innocent as an account in the almanac *Time's Telescope* (1826) relates:

*On the Saturday night, several hundreds of the workers of East London go with their families to the Sluice House at Hornsey, where, and in the adjacent fields, they carouse till daybreak. Soon afterwards, they collect their 'palm branches' and, to the best of their ability, make their way home.*

Along the Welsh border, the day was called 'Flowering Sunday', after the custom of decorating graves of deceased friends and relatives with flowers on the day, described by Charlotte Burne in 1883:

*Popularly, Palm Sunday appears to have been regarded as some sort of anticipatory event and they are both celebrated in the once (no doubt) common custom of strewing the graves of departed friends with sweet spring flowers. Albrighton churchyard yearly presents a touching sight on Palm Sunday, when all the graves are decked with daffodils and other flowers gathered in the woods and meadows about Boscabel and Whiteladies. I learn from an eye-witness that the display in 1879 was especially brilliant.*

In other places this was done on Easter Sunday. Superstitions gathered around the plants used on Palm Sunday, as they do at all traditional festivals. The plants strewn in the church processions, for example, were eagerly collected afterwards as they were reputed to preserve the house from thunder and lightning.

In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, while Catholic churches were simplifying their Palm Sunday rites, many Anglican churches were busy re-introducing palms into their celebrations for the day, and many church-going people still take note of Palm Sunday, although in a much more restrained way than in previous times.



# MAUNDY THURSDAY

The day before Good Friday was also known as Holy Thursday or Shere Thursday. 'Shere' was a technical term, now obsolete, used in the manufacture of coins, and signified 'the deviation from the standard weight of coins permitted by law'; its use in this context probably refers to the special coins minted for the day.

On Maundy Thursday, the ruling monarch (or their representative if they are away) presents Maundy gifts to as many elderly people as there are years in their reign. The custom takes its origin from an incident in the life of Christ, recorded in John's Gospel. Immediately after the Last Supper, Jesus laid aside his garments, girded himself with a towel, and, taking a basin of water, washed the feet of the Disciples. He delivered to them a command for his followers to love one another, saying, 'I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.' This command, or *mandatum*, is the origin of both the name and the custom of Maundy. Most branches of the Christian faith formerly carried out a foot-washing ceremony, and England was no exception. Indeed, foot-washing ceremonies were quite common in abbeys and cathedrals around the country from about the 6<sup>th</sup> century until the Dissolution of the Monasteries (1536-40), and could be performed at any time during the year, sometimes daily. It is not clear when ruling monarchs started taking a personal role in the Maundy ceremony, but the earliest definite reference relates to King John in 1210. The present custom is properly called the Royal Maundy because, at least in earlier days, other nobles and high-ranking churchmen also gave out Maundy doles.

In earliest times, the poor people who received the foot-washing numbered twelve or thirteen, and it is not clear when the figure was increased to match the years in a monarch's reign. Somewhat sumptuous robes were given to the poor people as well, But Queen Elizabeth I stopped this custom and instituted the more practical gift of money instead; it was also customary to give food. The last king to perform the foot-washing himself was James II in 1685. Until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, when the foot-washing was abolished, the Lord High Almoner then carried out this part of the ceremony, and he also sometimes gave out the money on the monarch's behalf.

A description of the ceremony in 1731:

*On the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1731, it being Maundy Thursday, the King then being*

*in his 48<sup>th</sup> year, there was distributed at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, to 48 poor men and 48 poor women, boiled beef and shoulders of mutton, and small bowls of ale, which is called dinner; after that, large wooden platters of fish and loaves, viz, undressed, one large ling and one large dried cod; twelve red herrings and twelve white herrings; and four quartern loaves. Each person had one platter of this provision; after which was distributed to them shoes, stockings, linen and woollen cloth, and leathern bags, with onepenny, twopenny, threepenny and fourpenny pieces of silver, and shillings, to each about £4 in value. His Grace The Lord Archbishop of York, Lord High Almoner, also performed the annual ceremony of washing the feet of the poor in the Royal Chapel, Whitehall, as formerly done by the king themselves.*

The custom has changed a great deal over the years, and both the food and the clothes have long been commuted into money. Since 1971, the ceremony has taken place at a different cathedral each year, and the recipients are chosen from the surrounding area for their contributions to the local community.

Steve Roud





# A MORNING WISH

The sun is just rising on the morning of another day, the first day of a new year. What can I wish that this day, this year, may bring to me?

Nothing that shall make the world or others poorer, nothing at the expense of other men; but just those few things which in their coming do not stop with me, but touch me rather, as they pass and gather strength.

A few friends who understand me, and yet remain my friends.

A work to do which has real value without which the world would feel the poorer. A return for such work small enough not to tax unduly anyone who pays.

A mind unafraid to travel, even though the trail be not blazed.

An understanding heart.

A sight of the eternal hills and unresting sea, and of something beautiful the hand of man has made.

A sense of humour and the power to laugh.

A little leisure with nothing to do.

A few moments of quiet, silent meditation. The sense of the presence of God.

And the patience to wait for the coming of these things, with the wisdom to know them when they come.

*W R Hunt*



# FACEBOOK FOR SENIORS

For those of a generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists: I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles. Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving round town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day. I also listen to their conversations, giving them 'thumbs up' and tell them I 'like' them. And it works just like Facebook. I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist.

*Written pre-lockdown*

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## EASTER EGGS

Easter eggs! Easter eggs! Give to him that begs!

*For Christ the Lord is arisen.*

To the poor, open door, something give from your store!

Those who hoard can't afford – moth and rust their reward!

Those who love freely give – long and well may they live!

Easter tide, like a bride, comes, and won't be denied.

*Traditional Russian Easter Song*



# A BROKEN CHRYSALIS

It's truly amazing what a girl will do for love.

My wife, Jean, and I lived next door to each other for ten years before we were married. My interest in high school biology had sparked a live caterpillar collection. Their home was a shoe box, covered with screen wire. When I went on vacation, Jean fed them faithfully with leaves from her willow tree. She hated it.

Finally the caterpillars stopped their incessant crawling and chewing, attached their tails firmly to a stick and lay still, sheathed with a shiny leather-like case. For weeks they seemed to be dead, unmoving in their tiny grey wrappings.

I removed the screen and waited. One by one, the grey cases began to twist and turn violently, and suddenly split open. A beautiful butterfly emerged. It stood for hours gently moving its wings, pumping fluids into them to extend them fully. Then the butterfly soared gracefully away on the breezes of summer, leaving nothing behind but a broken chrysalis to indicate its former bondage.

The chrysalis and butterfly suggest the empty graveclothes of our risen Lord. When Peter and John heard the news that the Lord's body was gone from the garden tomb, they ran all the way from their lodging. Peter entered the tomb and "he saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen" (John 20). The graveclothes once wrapped continuously around the body now lay collapsed, mute testimony that the corpse they had once shrouded had now emerged in life.

The bondage of death is broken. Christ is risen! We can face tomorrow with the assurance that Jesus is in fact alive to help us, to guide us, to give us hope for the future. And since He is living, our problems are not insolvable. The broken chrysalis of His graveclothes proclaims that Christ is Victor even over death.

Because He lives, nothing is impossible.

*Dr. Ralph F. Wilson*

# NEVER A CROSSWORD!

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7							8					
9									10			
11					12		13					
	14		15									
										16		17
18							19	20				
21					22							
23							24					

## ACROSS

1. Arch King of Bashan I have met. (5)
4. Biblical character giving directions to sailor? Right! (5)
9. Costlier version of a covered walkway. (8)
10. A river in Damascus, initially dried up. (4)
11. Prophet made a hat (with directions). (6)
13. Priest sees father's hill. (6)
15. Hopes; what about praises? (7)
18. Maureen's skill, we hear, as a classical composer. (6)
19. One of the Pope's colours signifies cowardice apparently. (6)
21. Son of Jacob not quite wearing the trousers? (4)
22. Somehow enable the cardinals from the Middle East. (8)
23. Having a harmful effect? Not today – it's poetry! (5)
24. Cardinal getting into Lent, but secretly having a big meal. (5)

## DOWN

2. Spirits provided by good party-givers. (6)
3. A match for a goddess? (5)
5. Memorials for generals and cardinals? (7)
6. Minced pie and a book – a perfect example of this? (7)
7. Coins thrown at idols. (5)
8. Pope gets right to try for what is his. (8)
12. Son of Jacob gets Phil a tan. (8)
14. I see fish round the Bishop's place. (7)
15. An Asian confused with a high priest. (7)
16. Not so young Methodist ministers? (6)
17. Little saint gets sugary. (5)
20. Ishmael at Eilat to bring happiness. (5)

# THOUGHT FOR FOOD

## Baked ginger salmon with sherry

A medley of soy sauce, sherry, ginger and garlic gives these salmon fillets their exquisite flavour.

### Ingredients

- 1 carrot, chopped into matchsticks
- ½ head of Chinese leaf, shredded
- 4 spring onions, finely sliced
- 270g pack salmon fillets
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 2 tbsp dry sherry
- 4cm piece ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- 100g basmati rice



Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cook: 20 minutes

Serves 2

Preheat the oven to gas 7, 220°C, fan 200°C. Put 2 x 45cm squares of foil on the worktop. Divide the carrot and put in the middle of the squares, followed by the Chinese leaf and half the spring onions. Put a salmon fillet on top of each.

Mix the soy sauce, sherry, ginger and garlic, then spoon over. Wrap each foil square tightly into a parcel, put on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 20 mins.

Meanwhile, cook the rice following the pack instructions then drain well. Remove the foil and serve the contents of each parcel with the rice; garnish with the remaining spring onions.

Enjoy with a nice glass or two of chilled dry white wine!

# HOT CROSS BUNS



A hot cross bun is a spiced sweet bun usually made with fruit, marked with a cross on the top, and traditionally eaten on Good Friday.

The bun marks the end of Lent and different parts of the hot cross bun have a certain meaning, including the cross representing the crucifixion of Jesus, and the spices inside signifying the

spices used to embalm him at his burial.

They are now available all year round with some supermarkets putting them on the shelves as early as New Year's Day or after Christmas.

In many historically Christian countries, plain buns made without dairy products (forbidden in Lent until Palm Sunday) are traditionally eaten hot or toasted during Lent, beginning with the evening of Shrove Tuesday (the evening before Ash Wednesday) to midday Good Friday. The Greeks in 6th century AD may have marked cakes with a cross.

One theory is that the Hot Cross Bun originates from St Albans, where Brother Thomas Rodcliffe, a 14th-century monk at St Albans Abbey, developed a similar recipe called an 'Alban Bun' and distributed the bun to the local poor on Good Friday, starting in 1361.

In the time of Elizabeth I of England (1592), the London Clerk of Markets issued a decree forbidding the sale of hot cross buns and other spiced breads, except at burials, on Good Friday, or at Christmas. The punishment for transgressing the decree was forfeiture of all the forbidden product to the poor. As a result of this decree, hot cross buns at the time were primarily made in domestic kitchens. Further attempts to suppress the sale of these items took place during the reign of James I of England (1603–1625).

The first definite record of hot cross buns comes from a London street cry: "Good Friday comes this month, the old woman runs. With one or two a penny hot cross buns", which appeared in *Poor Robin's Almanac* for 1733. Food historian Ivan Day states, "The buns were made in London during the 18th century. But when you start looking for records or recipes earlier than that, you hit nothing."

English folklore includes many superstitions surrounding hot cross buns. One of them says that buns baked and served on Good Friday will not spoil or grow mouldy during the subsequent year. Another encourages keeping such a bun for medicinal purposes. A piece of it given to someone ill is said to help them recover.

If taken on a sea voyage, hot cross buns are said to protect against shipwreck. If hung in the kitchen, they are said to protect against fires and ensure that all breads turn out perfectly. The hanging bun is replaced each year.

In the UK, the major supermarkets produce variations on the traditional recipe such as toffee, orange-cranberry, salted caramel and chocolate, and apple-cinnamon. The “not cross bun” is a variation on the hot cross bun. It uses the same ingredients but instead of having a cross on top, it has a smiley face in reference to it being "not cross" in the sense of not angry. The not cross bun was first sold commercially in 2014 by an Australian bakery in response to supermarkets selling hot cross buns as early as Boxing Day (26 December).

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## AND FINALLY .....

### CROSSWORD SOLUTION

**ACROSS** 1 Ogive 4 Abner 9 Cloister 10 Arid 11 Nathan 13 Pastor  
15 Aspires 18 Mozart 19 Yellow 21 Levi 22 Lebanese 23 Verse 24 Feast

**DOWN** 2 Ghosts 3 Vesta 5 Brasses 6 Epitome 7 Icons 8 Property  
12 Naphtali 14 Diocese 15 Ananias 16 Elders 17 Sweet 20 Elate

### Who's Where in The Warwick Team

Contacts in our partner churches in the Warwick Team include:

**All Saints**

Revd Diane Thompson (Team Vicar) 492073

**St Nicholas**

Revd Linda Duckers (Team Vicar) 496209

**St Paul's**

Revd Jonathan Hearne (Team Vicar) 419814

# ST MARY'S CONTACT NUMBERS

Revd Dr Vaughan Roberts (Team Rector)	492909
Parish Office	403940
Doreen Mills (Reader)	494692
Oliver Hancock (Director of Music)	403940
Gail Guest (Church Warden)	885421
John Luxton (Church Warden)	07740 046718
David Benson (Deputy Church Warden)	882207
Godfrey Hill (Deputy Church Warden)	02476 464432
Bell Ringers	492783
1 <sup>st</sup> Warwick St Mary's Rainbows/Brownies/Guides	403185
Choir	403940
Friends of St Mary's Choir	07549 534339
Collegium	498851
St Mary's Scholars	403940
St Mary's Study Group	07799 682872
Flowers	857351
Church Guides	403940
Gift Shop	403940
Sunday School	312861
Friends of St Mary's Church	419991
St Mary's Guild of Servers	07713 997769
Sidesmen	882207
Churches Together in Warwick	428420
Guild of Ex Choristers <a href="mailto:gec@stmaryswarwick.org.uk">gec@stmaryswarwick.org.uk</a>	740181
Tony King (Magazine Editor)	497349

## **Church Council Members**

The Rector, the Reader and Church Wardens	
John Adams (Treasurer)	07925 005389
Vicky Bartholomew (Secretary)	403449
Anne Brar	07714 523501
David Clark	465081
Grahame Edmonds	
Nick Edwards	<a href="mailto:nicholas.edwards@ymail.com">nicholas.edwards@ymail.com</a>
Alan Faulkner	
Desmond Jack	495795
Gill James (Synod member)	842024
Tony King	497349
Jayne McHale	497106
Joy Nugent (Synod member)	852565
Carol Warren	493940
Alice Webber	<a href="mailto:alicewebber@hotmail.com">alicewebber@hotmail.com</a>