

THE PARISH CHURCH OF SAINT MARY PENWORTHAM

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APRIL 2019

From the Editors

Welcome to our April edition. We are well in to the season of Lent now and Christians all over the world are using this time to reflect on the Passion of Christ and how best they can become more like Jesus and live a life of love and service in joy and happiness. Just as Christ was tempted in the wilderness so we, too, are tempted by many things in life. Not just the obvious things of wealth, material possessions and all of those other things which are associated with the senses but also the temptations to express anger, injustice, jealousy and all the other subtle ways we can express our selves in a less than Christ like way. So Lent gives us the opportunity to look at ourselves afresh and try to make new beginnings. It is good to know though that we are not alone – we are a brotherhood and sisterhood of millions of people who are striving to live well and to follow the teachings of Christ.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said:

"We say a person is a person through other persons. We don't come fully formed into the world. We learn how to think, how to walk, how to speak, how to behave, indeed how to be human, from other human beings. We need other human beings in order to be human. We are made for togetherness, we are made for family, for fellowship, to exist in a tender network of interdependence."

So in this season of Lent and the great celebration of Easter when we remember the triumph of Christ over sin and death we wish you strength and steadfastness in all that you do.

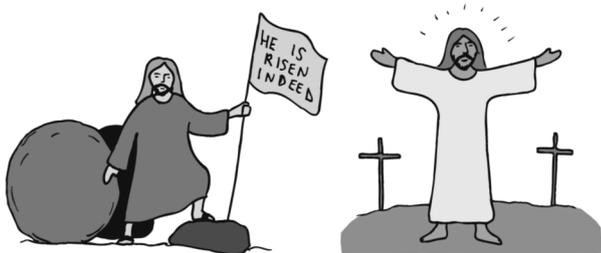
"The roofs are shining from the rain,
The sparrows twitter as they fly,
And with a windy April grace
The little clouds go by.
Yet the back yards are bare and brown
With only one unchanging tree--
I could not be so sure of Spring
Save that it sings in me."

- Sara Teasdale, April

**HE IS RISEN IN-
DEED
ALLELUIA**

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From the Editors

St. Mary's News

Plans for our new building

Plans and an artist impression of the proposed new building to replace the current 1956 building are now on display near to the refreshment table. The PCC saw them earlier this week when the architect explained them and answered questions. The PCC were very impressed.

This is the start of a very long process including consultation with PressureGroups, the Local Authority and the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) but feel free to ask the Vicar or Churchwardens if you have any queries.

Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Every year we hold an APCM where the church elects Churchwardens, PCC members and Sidespersons to serve for another year and the Annual Report and Financial Statement are presented. It is an opportunity to hear what has been going on in our church over the past year and how our finances are holding up. It is an important event in the life of the parish and demonstrates the important values of democracy and transparency in our church.

This year the APCM will be held at 11.30 am on **Sunday 28th April**, after the 10.15 am service. All parishioners are welcome so please feel free to come along and hear what happens in the life of the parish.

Funeral of Alice Halliwell

What a wonderful contribution Alice made wherever she lived and worked! People of Penwortham in particular benefited from the work she did for St Mary's and the community in general. From spending years as Superintendent of Sunday School to Security Officer on the stage at the auctions run by Christine Smith, Alice was a kind, thoughtful, generous Christian. Even in her last years in residential homes she comforted other residents. She led a full life. How respectful was her funeral! She would have been embarrassed by such a great gathering, some travelling from afar. She had wanted no fuss. Everyone's part in the service, the ministry, the bellringing, the music, the people on duty, the care of the grounds and the building, all contributed to the event which celebrated her part in our lives. We truly were a family. Thank you everyone for your efforts, love and support shown following the death of my neighbour, teacher, fellow worshipper and friend.

Trish Wootton

Leyland Band Concert also supporting Christian Aid

At the concert by Leyland Brass Band on Thursday 4th April, there will also be a bucket collection to support Christian Aid. Any money raised on this occasion will be put towards one of the targeted projects Christian Aid runs where the money we raise will be match funded by the EU so whatever we raise will get 3 times the amount from the EU- so each pound becomes worth 4. Please do come prepared to contribute.

Rachel Tuke 01772 460142

Christian Aid Week 2019 12th-18th May

Christian Aid week this year takes place between the 12th and 18th May. We will here in Penwortham be taking part through our house to house collection. Christian Aid week remains the biggest fund raiser for Christian Aid and at the moment house to house collections continue to bring a significant portion of the money raised. I am very grateful to the many collectors who continue to help collect in our area, but there is always room for more people to help.

If you are able to give us a few hours of your time to collect in a small area please do let me know. You don't have to go alone, if you would like to work with someone else to collect in a particular area, then that can be arranged. You can encourage younger people to help by delivering envelopes but anyone collecting must be at least 16 to go unaccompanied.

If you have other ideas for fund raising or would be prepared to help organise a Big Brekkie, then again please do let me know. Any ideas gratefully received.

Churchyard.

For many years now a small but dedicated team has met on Thursday mornings to work in the churchyard and keep it looking beautiful and welcoming to worshippers and visitors alike. The team is not getting any younger and we need some help. We thought it might be a good idea to have some sessions on Saturday mornings as well. The work is not onerous mainly keeping the grass cut and looking after the flower beds. If you feel you can help you will be most welcome.

The next date is **Saturday 6th April** between 9.30 am to 12.00. Refreshments will be provided.

FOODBANK REQUESTS.

Penwortham Churches Together Food Bank are very short of the following:

Hot dogs: corned beef, ham, meatballs, Irish stew, Fray Bentos pies: tinned mince, stewing steak & curries, tinned peas, carrots & potatoes, tinned fruit, & rice pudding, custard, small packs of tea bags, nappies(Size 2, 3 or bigger).

Please leave anything with the Churchwardens. Thank you.



LEYLAND BAND CONCERT

**ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH
THURSDAY 4TH APRIL 8.00 PM
TICKETS £10**

There will also be a bucket collection to support Christian Aid

From the Editors

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MINISTRY (FAB, SPARKS,)

WEEK ONE:

SPARKS—Cinema Sunday during 10.15am service

WEEK TWO:

SPARKS—Stories, crafts & games during 10.15am service

WEEK THREE:

SPARKS—Stories, crafts & games during 10.15am service

WEEK FOUR:

FAB (Faith and Belonging) All age Family "Messy Church" - Craft, games, family challenge, story & café time—3pm to 5pm in Church

WEEK FIVE; (when applicable)

SPARKS— Stories, crafts & games during 10.15am service.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT DEBBIE WIGGINS

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Church News

General Synod backs plans to mobilise one million worshippers

Plans to encourage the Church of England's one million regular worshippers to be more confident in spreading the Christian message in their everyday lives were given the backing of the General Synod in February.

Members of the General Synod welcomed the Church of England's campaign *Motivating the Million*, which is aimed at helping congregations in speaking about and living out their faith in homes, communities and workplaces.

The plans include work to create more lay leaders in the Church of England and a project to help build the confidence of worshippers to invite their friends to church events.

The General Synod also backed a call for all the Church of England's 12,500 parishes to become involved in the global prayer movement '*Thy Kingdom Come*' for more people to come to know Jesus Christ.

The Revd Barry Hill, from the Diocese of Leicester, moving a motion at the General Synod commending the work of the Church of England's Evangelism and Discipleship department, said evangelism could not be left to clergy alone.

"Evangelism doesn't belong to any one part of the Church, it needs all of our church to reach all of our nation," he said. "Most people know a Christian – most people don't know a bishop or even a vicar."

The Bishop of Leicester, Martyn Snow, described evangelists as a 'gift' to the Church, and said we needed more of them. "Today's evangelists will not be lone rangers – today's evangelists will not be loud extroverts who frighten everyone with their enthusiasm.

“The evangelists of today need to be team members who mentor and coach others in everyday faith conversations, helping people to overcome their anxiety and helping them to think through the tough questions that anyone who publicly owns the name of Christian will get asked.”

General Synod backs drive to create new churches on estates

The General Synod of the Church of England has given its overwhelming backing to a drive for a church to be set up on every significant social housing estate in the country, as part of a programme of Renewal and Reform.

All dioceses will now be asked to include evangelism on social housing estates in their strategies and clergy deployment plans.

The Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, who heads the Church of England’s Estates Evangelism Task Group, told the General Synod that in the past, the Church had closed churches and withdrawn clergy from social housing estates.

But now, the Church has a new vision. “It’s a very simple one. To have a loving, serving, worshipping Christian community on every significant social housing estate in the nation. To plant back in the estates we have abandoned, to better support our presence in the places where we’re struggling. If we can do that, the impact on church and nation will be transformative.”

A fifth of the Church of England’s 12,500 parishes are estimated to be ‘estates parishes’, meaning that they include at least 500 social housing units.

New standards on gambling advertisements

Following publication by the Committee of Advertising Practice of new standards protecting children from irresponsible gambling advertisements, The Bishop of St Albans, The Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith, said:

“While I welcome the proposals, these new standards are, in fact, another lost opportunity in the fight against problem gambling.

“With little consequences for companies flouting the rules and few teeth to enforce these new directives, the Committee of Advertising Practice needs to step-up their approach.

“With so many of the proposals relying on betting firms to self-regulate I sadly have little hope for major changes to the way gambling advertises.

“This endless barrage of adverts has normalised gambling and we now have 55,000 children who are problem gamblers and it is time for the gambling industry to take this issue seriously.”

Time and money are the heaviest burdens of life, and unhappiest of all mortals are those who have more of either than they know how to use. - Samuel Johnson

City life: Millions of people being lonesome together. - Thoreau

All in the Month of April

It was:

300 years ago, on 25th April 1719 that Daniel Defoe's novel Robinson Crusoe was published.

125 years ago, on 16th April 1894 that Manchester City Football Club was founded. It was a reorganisation of a church team that was established in 1880, initially as St Mark's (West Gorton), and, from 1887, Ardwick Association Football Club.

100 years ago, on 11th April 1919 that the International Labour Organisation was founded as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended WWI. It later became part of the United Nations. Its first act was to establish an 8-hour working day and maximum 48-hour working week.

90 years ago, on 14th April 1929 that the first Monaco Grand Prix was held in Monte Carlo.

80 years ago, on 1st April 1939 that the Spanish Civil War ended. General Franco's government was officially recognised.

70 years ago, on 4th April 1949 that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was founded.

50 years ago, on 22nd April 1969 that British sailor Sir Robin Knox-Johnston became the first person to circumnavigate the globe non-stop and single-handed.

40 years ago, on 1st April 1979 that Iran was proclaimed an Islamic Republic.

30 years ago, on 14th April 1989 that the Hillsborough Disaster took place in Sheffield. 96 Liverpool FC fans were killed in a crush during the F A C Cup semi-final football match against Nottingham Forest.

25 years ago, on 6th April 1994 that the Rwandan genocide began when a plane carrying Rwandan president Juvenal Habyarimana and Burundian president Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down by extremists. Civil war broke out the following day. An estimated 1 million people were massacred during the next 100 days.

Also 25 years ago, on 27th April 1994 that post-apartheid multiracial elections were held in South Africa, with 18 million blacks eligible to vote for the first time. Nelson Mandela was elected president and took office on 10th May.

20 years ago, on 5th April 1999 that Libya handed over to the United Nations two suspects in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie. They were taken to the Netherlands to face trial. Abdelbaset al-Megrahi was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment and later released. Died May 2012. The other suspect was acquitted.

Also 20 years ago, on 26th April 1999 that Jill Dando, TV presenter, newsreader, journalist and former Crimewatch reporter was shot dead on the doorstep of her home in London. It is still a mystery who killed her.

This world has cares enough to plague us; but he who meditates on others' woe, shall, in the meditation, lose his own. - Cumberland

There's nothing better than a good friend, except a good friend with chocolate. - Linda Grayson

Organisations

Mothers' Union

Former members of St Mary's Mothers' Union are reminded that we have arranged to meet at 2pm on Tuesday 2nd April at Penwortham Golf Club. The full menu will be available for those wishing to take refreshment. Friends who were not members will be welcome too.

Trish Wootton

Guild of St. Mary

On the 18th April Norman Cutler from the Fundraising Team of St. Catherine's Hospice in Lostock Hall will be telling us about its life and work.

There will be a general 'Bring and Buy' stall at this meeting to raise a few funds. Please support us if you can. Most items will be welcome plus books, magazines and plants

Ann Yates

The Parish Thanks

ALTAR FLOWERS

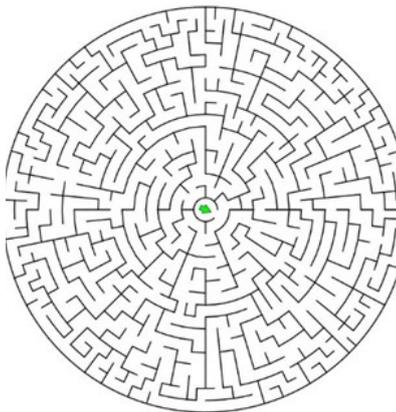
April

During Lent, flowers are placed in the Memorial Window only

7 th	Carol Johnson, in memory of Elsie and Richard Holding
14 th	Vacancy
21 st	EASTER SUNDAY
28 th	David and Maureen Thornton, in memory of their parents

ALTAR LINEN

April- Mrs Judith Kirby



*They could have either a procession of crosses,
or a donkey. But not both.*

Calendar

4 th	8.00 pm	Leyland Band Concert
6 th	9.30-12.00 noon	Churchyard Maintenance
7 th	THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT	
	8.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 2)
	10.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 1) with Sparks
10 th	6.30 pm	Christian Meditation
11 th	9.30 am	Holy Communion
	10.00-12.00 noon	Churchyard Maintenance
	10.00-12.00 noon	Open Church
	7.30 pm	Bell Ringing Practice
14 th	PALM SUNDAY	
	(Palm Sunday Liturgy and distribution of Palms)	
	8.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 2)
	10.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 1) with Sparks
17 th	6.30 pm	Christian Meditation
18 th	MAUNDY THURSDAY	
	9.30 am	Holy Communion
	10.00-12.00 noon	Churchyard Maintenance
	10.00-12.00 noon	Open Church
	7.30 pm	Maundy Thursday Liturgy
19 th	GOOD FRIDAY	
	10.00 am	Walk of Witness
		Circular walk from Penwortham Methodist Church
	11.00 am	Short Service
21 st	EASTER DAY	
	8.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 2)
	10.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 1)
24 th	6.30 pm	Christian Meditation
25 th	9.30 am	Holy Communion
	10.00-12.00 noon	Churchyard Maintenance
	10.00-12.00 noon	Open Church
	7.30 pm	Bell Ringing Practice
28 th	THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER	
	8.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 2)
	10.15 am	Holy Communion (Order 1)
	11.30 am	APCM

Easter Trivia

Easter trivia quiz

What was the largest ever Easter egg hunt?

The most-ever entrants for an egg hunt competition was 12,773. It was The Fabergé Big Egg Hunt, as part of World Record London, in London, UK in April 2012.

What was the largest-ever decorated Easter egg?

This was built in March 2008, by Freeport in Alcochete, Portugal. It measured 14.79 m (48 ft 6 in) long and 8.40 m (27 ft 6 in) in diameter.

What was the largest ever chocolate Easter egg?

It was made in Tosca (Italy) and weighed 7,200 kg (15,873 lbs 4.48 oz). It had a circumference of 19.6 m (64 ft 3.65 in) at its widest point. It was exhibited in a shopping centre in Cortenuova, Italy, in April 2011.

What was the largest ever Easter egg tree?

This was set by Zoo Rostock GmbH, Rostock, Germany, who decorated a tree with 76,596 painted hens' eggs in April 2007.

What about the most expensive hot cross bun?

This was baked in 1829 in Stepney, London, UK. It was bought by Bill Foster (UK) for £155 at the Antiques for Everyone show at the NEC in Birmingham, West Midlands, UK, in April 2000. Hot cross buns were originally made to hang in the kitchen to ward off evil spirits.

What was the biggest-ever (real) Easter bunny?

So far, the longest rabbit was Darius, a Flemish giant rabbit owned by Annette Edwards (UK), who was found to be 4 ft 3 in (129 cm) long when measured for an article in the UK's Daily Mail newspaper in April 2010.

Where did the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs come from?

The Easter bunny is a gentle figure of folklore, who seems to have first come from the German Lutherans. They depicted him as a rabbit who brought coloured Easter eggs to children. The idea of an egg-giving hare went over to the US in the 18th century, when Protestant German immigrants in the Pennsylvania Dutch area told their children about the 'Osterhase'. Hase means hare, and according to the legend, only good children found the hare's gifts of coloured eggs, placed in the nests that they had made in their caps and bonnets before Easter.

The Easter bunny became a prominent symbol of Easter. Rabbits, prolific procreators, are an ancient symbol of new life. Easter eggs are said to represent Jesus' emergence from the tomb and resurrection.

Decorating Easter eggs dates back to at least the 13th century. One possible reason for the custom was that in those days eggs were forbidden during the Lenten season. So people would paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, and then eat them on Easter as a celebration.

History Corner

FROM THE ARCHIVES : APRIL 1919

Penwortham Church Girls Club

A meeting of the Committee of the above Club was held on Thursday, when it was decided to organise a Dance for Thursday,, April 24th in the Penwortham End Sunday School. The tickets will be 1/6 each, and the time from 8 to 1. The Girls Club have not organised a dance since the War began, and we hope this one may prove a great success. The following Thursday a Whist Drive is being arranged, but after which there will be no dancing. Tickets 1/6 each, and the time from 8 to 11 pm.

Matters of Faith

Please pray....

For those who have recently died

John Wallace



HIGH DAYS AND HOLY DAYS

1st April - Fooling Around by Canon David Winter

I was about six when I began to enjoy April Fool's Day. My older brother was very clever at appropriate hoaxes, not only deceiving me but also mum and dad. On the whole my childish efforts were encouraged. The day was full of laughs, even at school, where the teachers would try to trick us and all day long no one quite believed anything they were told. So it went on, year after year, though I think it all seems as a bit unsophisticated for the modern generation.

You couldn't say that, though, about probably the most famous April Fool's effort of all time. In the 1960's BBC TV broadcast a feature on the spaghetti farms of Italy. Even those of us who bought our spaghetti in the supermarket from the pasta shelves began to wonder if we'd been wrong. Italian farmers explained their work and the progress of the spaghetti plants was carefully filmed, from planting to reaping. And all in the BBC's most serious documentary manner. It took a while to appreciate that this was Aunty playing games. Whatever next!

The odd thing is that no one is quite sure of the origin of this very British tradition. Most attribute it to changes in Britain's calendar in the 1700s, when New Year's Day moved from March 25th to January 1st. Not surprisingly, the change caused a lot of confusion and mistakes around the start of April. Others look further back, to the ancient Roman feast of Hilaria, when the goddess Cybele was celebrated with pranks and jokes around the spring equinox, March 25th. Either way a touch of hilarity at the end of Lent does not seem amiss. Go to Greece, where the resurrection of Jesus is celebrated with fireworks and parties to see how it might work.

14th April - Palm Sunday: Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, when the Church remembers how Jesus arrived at the gates of Jerusalem just a few days before the Passover was due to be held. He was the Messiah come to his own people in their capital city, and yet he came in humility, riding on a young donkey, not in triumph, riding on a war-horse. As Jesus entered the city, the crowds gave him a rapturous welcome, throwing palm fronds into his path. They knew his reputation as a healer, and welcomed him. But sadly the welcome was short-lived and shallow, for Jerusalem would soon reject her Messiah, and put him to death. On this day churches worldwide will distribute little crosses made from palm fronds in memory of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem.

18th April - Maundy Thursday – time to wash feet

Maundy Thursday is famous for two things. The first is one of the final acts that Jesus did before his death: the washing of his own disciples' feet. (see John 13) Jesus washed his disciples' feet for a purpose: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another.

In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis'. The word 'mundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The ceremony of the 'washing of the feet' of members of the congregation came to be an important part of the liturgy (regular worship) of the medieval church, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

But Thursday was also important because it was on that night that Jesus first introduced the Lord's Supper, or what we nowadays call Holy Communion.

Jesus and his close friends had met in a secret upper room to share the Passover meal together - for the last time. And there Jesus transformed the Passover into the Lord's Supper, saying, 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' as he, the Lamb of God, prepared to die for the sins of the whole world. John's gospel makes it clear that the Last Supper took place the evening BEFORE the regular Passover meal, and that later Jesus died at the same time that the Passover lambs were killed.

19th April - Good Friday: Jesus and the thieves on the Cross

Luke's account of the crucifixion (Luke 23:32-43) emphasises the mocking of the crowd, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself' (35,37,39). In their view a Messiah does not hang on a cross and suffer. In considering the two men who was crucified with Jesus, we are also confronted with the issue of how Jesus secures salvation for us.

The words of one of those crucified with Jesus reflected the crowd's taunts: 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us.' He highlights the question of Jesus' identity: how can He save others, when He cannot save himself from death? He failed to see that the cross itself was the means of salvation.

So - what kind of Messiah was Jesus?

Matters of Faith

The other criminal's response in his last moments is a moving expression of faith. When challenging the other man, he spoke of the utter injustice of the crucifixion: *'this man has done nothing wrong.'* He perceived the truth that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. In a wonderful picture of grace, *'remember me when you come into your kingdom'*, the second thief confessed his guilt and secured Jesus' forgiveness and mercy. In reply, Jesus promised the man life from the moment of death; *'Today you will be with me in paradise.'* Jesus used the picture of a *walled garden* to help the man understand his promise of protection and security in God's love and acceptance eternally. Each one of us has to choose how we react to Jesus on the cross. Do we want him to 'remember' us when He comes into his kingdom, or not? If you were to die tonight, how confident would you be of going to be with Jesus? *'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.'* (1 Peter 3:18).

21st April – EASTER: the most joyful day of the year

Easter is the most joyful day of the year for Christians. Christ has died for our sins. We are forgiven. Christ has risen! We are redeemed! We can look forward to an eternity in His joy! Hallelujah!

The Good News of Jesus Christ is a message so simple that you can explain it to someone in a few minutes. It is so profound that for the rest of their lives they will still be 'growing' in their Christian walk with God.

Why does the date move around so much? Because the date of Passover moves around, and according to the biblical account, Easter is tied to the Passover. Passover celebrates the Israelites' exodus from Egypt and it lasts for seven days, from the middle of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which equates to late March or early April.

Why the name, 'Easter'? In almost every European language, the festival's name comes from 'Pesach', the Hebrew word for Passover. The Germanic word 'Easter', however, seems to come from Eostre, a Saxon fertility goddess mentioned by the Venerable Bede. He thought that the Saxons worshipped her in 'Eostur month', but may have confused her with the classical dawn goddesses like Eos and Aurora, whose names mean 'shining in the east'. So, Easter might have meant simply 'beginning month' – a good time for starting up again after a long winter.

Finally, why Easter eggs? On one hand, they are an ancient symbol of birth in most European cultures. On the other hand, hens start laying regularly again each Spring. Since eggs were forbidden during Lent, it's easy to see how decorating and eating them became a practical way to celebrate Easter.

There's not much practical Christianity in the man who lives on better terms with angels and seraphs, than with his children, servants and neighbours. - H W Beecher

23rd April - St George of the Golden Legend

The Saint of an English Army before he was Patron Saint of England, St George may have been a soldier, but he was no Englishman. He was an officer in the Roman army under Diocletian, who refused to abandon his faith during the Terror, and was martyred at Lydda in Palestine about the year 300 AD - supposedly 23 April. Over the years St George became the example of a Christian fighting-man, a powerful helper against evil powers affecting individual lives. He was the soldier-hero of the Middle Ages, of whom remarkable deeds were reported.

In the Golden Legend of the 13th century, Jacobus de Voragine gave St George a handsome write-up. The story runs thus:

One day, St George rode up to the heathen city of Sylene in Lybia, where he found the citizens in great distress. A neighbouring dragon had forced them to surrender two sheep each day for its dinner, and when the sheep gave out, two of their children; and now they were about to sacrifice the King's daughter, dressed as if for her wedding. St George encountered the little party by a stagnant lake, where the dragon lived, and persuaded the sobbing Princess to tell him why she was so miserable. At that moment the dragon appeared, looking inexpressibly revolting. The Saint charged, and drove his spear into the gaping mouth. To everyone's amazement, he tumbled the monster over and over.

Then St George borrowed the Princess's girdle, tied it round the dragon's neck, and persuaded her to lead it back to Sylene herself. The sight of her approaching with the befuddled dragon on its makeshift lead emptied the town. When the inhabitants timidly crept back, St George promised to behead the dragon if they would all believe in Jesus Christ and be baptised.

It was a most effective form of evangelism, for everybody said 'yes' at once. So 15,000 people were baptised, and four carts were commissioned to remove the dragon's body.

St George thus became a symbol of the war against evil, and is usually portrayed trampling the dragon of sin under his horse's hoofs. The Crusaders had a vision of him helping them against the Saracens at Antioch, during the first Crusade, and so brought the story of St George back with them from Palestine. Presently England put herself under the protection of the Saint. His day was declared a holiday in 1222. A red cross on a white field is the flag of St George.

Get moving

It is April - time to get the family outside and enjoy more exercise! One in three children are doing less than 30 minutes exercise a day, according to a recent Sport England report.

That means that 2.3million kids nationwide do less than half the Chief Medical Officer's recommended level of daily activity of at least an hour. As one expert said: "This is a big wake up call. Parents need to get active alongside their children so that exercise feels like a normal thing to do."

Miscellaneous

Why we are turning to soap bars

It's official: we are buying more soap bars these days. And that is a good thing. It is all a part of the major consumer backlash against unnecessary plastic waste. More and more of us want eco-friendly versions of our everyday needs. Thus, we have 'bags for life', loose fruit and veg, and now – bars of soap. Liquid soaps took off in the 1990s and was marketed as more hygienic than barred soap. But since then, numerous scientific studies have found this to be myth. And in the meantime, hundreds of millions of plastic bottles full of soap have been used once – and thrown into the environment. Whereas with a bar of soap, once it is gone, it is really gone. *The data on soap sales was researched by Kantar Worldpanel.*

Keep an eye on your teenage daughter

If she is spending more than three hours a day on social media, she may well need your help. A recent study has found that such girls are more than twice as likely to have depression as their male classmates. A government-funded study by UCL found that more than 25% of teenage girls who average three to five hours a day online have clinical symptoms of depression. For those girls who spend more than five hours a day on social media, 38.1 per cent will have signs of depression. By contrast, just 14 per cent of boys who spent five hours or more a day on social media suffered from depression. As one doctor at UCL explained: "More time spent on social media related to having poorer sleep, more experiences of online harassment, unhappiness with the way they look and low self-esteem." She urged families to consider curfews on their use, and removing phones from bedrooms. *The study was published in the Lancet's online journal. EClinicalMedicine.*

You are what you think about

Negative thoughts can actually harm you, physically. In a recent study by the universities of Exeter and Oxford, it was found that if you listen to that critical inner voice, you will end up with an increased heart rate, consistent with feelings of being under threat and distress. On the other hand, positive thoughts have the opposite effect. Those in the study who were encouraged to be kind to themselves when things went wrong, reported more self-compassion, connection with others, and had feelings of relaxation and safety. No wonder that Paul urges us: "Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things... And the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4: 8,9)



SMILE

The bishop's visit

A bishop was visiting a small church in his diocese for Easter. He wanted the young people to understand what he had to say about the Good Shepherd, so he dressed up in his bishop's long, flowing robes and carried his crook. "Now," beamed the bishop, "do you know who I am?"

After a moment's silence, one child ventured "Little Bo Peep?"

Tactful

There was once a minister who was determined that things should be done properly during each service, yet he had a great gift for being gentle and tactful.

The congregation often read the 23rd Psalm together. One Sunday before they started, he said smilingly: "Oh, may I ask the lady who always arrives at the still waters while the rest of us are in the green pastures, to wait for us this time?"

Great expectations

At a baptism the young minister was full of enthusiasm. He held the baby in his arms and speculated aloud as to the child's possible future. "He may become a captain of industry, a great scientist, or a gifted teacher – someone on whom hundreds of young boys may model themselves." Then turning to the parents in a rather grand manner, he asked, "And so what name to you give to this child?"

Timidly, the reply came: "Amanda Jane."

The Good Samaritan

A young minister was telling his church the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. He got carried away and described the situation in vivid detail, wanting his congregation to catch the drama of it all. Then he asked rhetorically: 'If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?'

A little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd be sick."

Higher power?

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, ' We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in Bible times. But there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?' One child blurted out, 'Aces!'

Moses and the Red Sea

Nine-year-old Joseph was asked by his mother what he had learned in Sunday school. 'Well, Mum, our teacher told us how God sent Moses behind enemy lines on a rescue mission to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When he got to the Red Sea, Moses had his army build a pontoon bridge and all the people walked across safely. Then, he radioed HQ for reinforcements. They sent bombers to blow up the bridge and all the Israelites were saved.'

"Now, Joseph, is that really what your teacher taught you?" his mother asked, startled.

Miscellaneous

Easy Sudoku

	7			4		6		
				1	7	4	8	
	9	5	6	3			2	
1	8		3	2		5		
2								9
		9		5	4		7	2
	1			9	6	3	5	
	4	2	1	7				
		6		8			1	

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A little harder

		1		6			5	
		4	9					
					5	9		
	2			4				6
6				3				8
3				8			7	
		7	2					
					1	5		
3			7			4		

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Last month's
Easy solution

2	5	3	6	7	8	9	1	4
9	4	6	5	2	1	8	7	3
8	7	1	9	4	3	6	2	5
1	6	5	3	8	7	2	4	9
3	8	4	2	9	5	7	6	1
7	9	2	1	6	4	3	5	8
4	3	8	7	5	2	1	9	6
5	2	9	8	1	6	4	3	7
6	1	7	4	3	9	5	8	2

Harder solution

6	2	4	3	8	7	5	9	1
1	3	9	4	5	6	8	2	7
7	5	8	1	9	2	4	3	6
4	9	6	8	1	3	7	5	2
2	8	3	7	6	5	1	4	9
5	1	7	9	2	4	3	6	8
9	4	1	2	3	8	6	7	5
3	6	2	5	7	1	9	8	4
8	7	5	6	4	9	2	1	3

**FOR GOD SO
LOVED THE
WORLD THAT
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ONE WHO BE-
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MAY NOT PER-
ISH BUT MAY
HAVE ETERNAL
LIFE
John 3 v. 16**

With Easter in mind...

Carry the cross patiently, and with perfect submission; and in the end it shall carry you. - Thomas a Kempis

The doctrine of the death of Christ is the substance of the gospel. - Stephen Charnock

Easter Peace: it does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.

- Anon

Easter spells out beauty, the rare beauty of new life. - S D Gordon