

St John Southworth Parish

Christ Church, Carr Rd,
and St John Southworth Church, Vaughan St, Nelson
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Easter Triduum 9th - 12th April 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

We were living in a world in which the death and resurrection of Christ were being forgotten. People were no longer interested in the empty tomb; Jesus Christ was just another man who had died. He might have been a remarkable man whose impact on the world was greater than no other; all kinds of strange stories may have circulated about his identity, but all this having been said, in the global mentality of our world, he was just another man who had died.

We had all become humanists in that we felt that, as human beings, we are masters of our own destiny. All this had become normal belief, whether it was expressed consciously or not, this was where we had got to. The Church was losing its relevance, and in many ways the Church was promoting the humanistic message that human goodness would eventually prevail.

However, all those who had ventured down to the empty tomb and discovered, through the illumination of faith, that Jesus had risen from the dead, were awakened to the possibility and reality of a new world.

From time to time, we experience the weakness or the emptiness of our human existence. Pain can so easily make its way onto our lives—pain which is at once overwhelming and undermining. Whether this is personal or social, we recognise that a more basic feature of our human identity, is not that we are good, but that we are a people in need.

God comes to our help. More precisely, God himself comes, in the person of Jesus, to our help! He helps us not only by showing us a better way, but by enabling us to live in a better way. And that better way is by living in the power of the Holy Spirit who is released into our world through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is our faith, and this is the power of our faith. The more intimately we are united with Jesus, which means the more deeply we enter into his death and resurrection, the more his Spirit takes over our lives.

If only our faith were strong we would welcome the opportunities that life throws at us to experience our neediness. In that sense, every problem, suffering and sadness are experienced as Good Friday moments which unite us to Christ crucified. Conversely, every joy and blessing which we experience in our ordinary lives become opportunities to praise God in the recognition that all blessings flow from the Blessing which is the resurrection of Jesus.

We live in a time during which all that we take for granted is being disrupted, and as yet, we don't know what the fallout will be from the economic breakdown which is sure to follow this period. But let's be confident that if the death of Christ can bring about a new undreamed of blessing from God, then we can look forward to a new experience of life from which we will never want to return.

*With every blessing of Easter,
Fr Gerard*