

## Looking Forward to Holy Week

It isn't meant to be a question but rather a statement about intentions. As a worshipping community we are approaching the most important week in our calendar and it is necessary that we ensure that we are prepared to enter this week with a proper resolve to participate as fully as we can. It means being aware of what is happening in our lives and that we choose to come to the liturgies of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil in a spirit of prayer and generosity. These liturgies are the Church's witness to the world about the meaning of our humanity, but that witness is lost if the Church is not present. So put the dates in your diaries and come and be that witness.

### **Maundy Thursday 17 April at 7.30 pm at St Thomas More**

The narrative which was begun on Palm Sunday now begins to climax as we, like those first disciples, gather to share the bread and cup of the Last Supper. It is the most intimate of meals and it re-presents the events of that night when Jesus spoke words and performed deeds of mystery and deep significance. *Do this in memory of me* is the command and we are faithful to that command. Our whole discipleship flows from this evening as water is taken and poured into a bowl and used to wash our feet. This is the genesis by which every act of Christian *diakonia* is shaped, through a simple yet powerful act of love. After the mass we are asked to accompany the Lord to the Garden of Gethsemane, to watch and pray; the Church will remain open till 11.00pm; can we not find one hour to contemplate and share this sacred moment?

### **Good Friday 18 April at 3.00 pm at St Thomas More**

Where do we stand in the Passion? Pilate, Judas, the High Priest, Peter, Mary, the beloved disciple, the crowd. All can speak to us of human frailty, abuse of power and self-interest as well as tenderness and grief, pathos and suffering; nothing is excluded. So we must not exclude ourselves and we must resist the pull of the secular world around us which has all but abandoned its deference to this day, and be at the foot of the cross. We must listen with attention to the words of Jesus and comprehend the symbolism of the imagery. This is where the Church is formed, this is where our family finds its meaning, this is the birth of our understanding of how God so loved the world. *Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother...and the disciple he loved.* This is where we must stand too.

### **The Easter Vigil 19 April at 7.30pm at St Paul's**

Saturday, the great silence. The stone has been placed across the entry to the tomb, all is still and sombre until the moment of celebration, **so come and be part of it!** Don't leave it out, but allow yourselves to be literally washed in it. *Exult, exult* is the cry, *Christ is risen*. How can we not race to the tomb? Yes the journey may be a little further but the power of the resurrection must overcome our hesitancy, just as it overcomes the fear of the women at the tomb. The joy of the resurrection must fill our hearts with its message of victory and we must not lose a moment. Let us set aside our fears and our mumblings and enter into the mystery which gives us the true meaning of our lives. Let us be there so that we can rejoice.

### **What then can I do?**

Ministers, altar servers, readers, musicians, singers, welcomers, flower arrangers, Church cleaners, members; your church needs you all to make these liturgies happen. We all play our part and take up our roles, so don't leave it up to others. You are called. If you are asked to undertake a role in the washing of the feet or in the reading of the Passion, please agree to do so. After Mass at 5.30pm on Saturday 5 April there will be a run through of the music for the liturgies and full details for altar servers will be published in the newsletter notices. Above all I implore you to come and make this holy week and its liturgies our pride and our joy.