

ParishQuarterly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

www.olasotley.org

E A S T E R 2 0 2 0



Fr Lawrie's message for Easter

If you go to the pilgrimage site in Lourdes and wander down by the river, past the grotto and the baths, cross the bridge and soon you will see the most modern version of the Stations of the Cross, sculpted by Maria de Faykod. There is an additional station after the Crucifixion that is entitled **"Mary awaits the Resurrection"**. The statue is one where Mary seems to know what is going to happen, despite all that has gone before, the Passion and Death of Jesus. The smile that plays on her face could be described as smug, but only in the sense that Mary "believed the promises made by the Lord will be fulfilled". (Luke's Gospel Chapter 1:45)

Perhaps for all of us just now that time of "waiting" is a reality. We can "wait" anxiously, fearfully or confidently that this present time of insecurity, worry and upset will come to an end. That there will be a resurrection for each and every one of us.

This is the Easter message. So perhaps our time of waiting can be one of confident expectation and we may use the time to remember in our prayers and hearts those Pope Francis in his recent **Urbi et Orbi** described as today's modern Heroes *"doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves"*.

While we "wait" could I remind you of the ending of the Poet John Milton's *Ode to his Blindness*, "They also serve who only stand and wait." The poet reflects that we all have a place in God's world.

Waiting to see you all again soon! Happy and Blessed Easter

Father Lawrie

Reflections for Lent and Easter

I am writing this article on the 3rd Sunday of Lent and after a few false starts. What I write today is very different to what I would have written only 2 weeks ago. In the New Testament an often-used word is 'listen'. The first reflection is to ask readers, 'What message is God sending to us as individuals and as a society?' in the current pandemic.

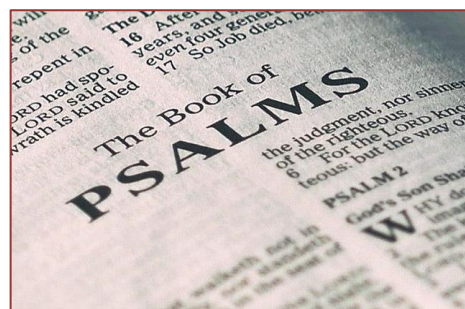
When I come to write a piece like this, I always ask the Lord for a word from Scripture to help me and the word I was given this time was 'high places'. This led me to the idea that the story of Lent and Easter begins scripturally in high and remote places with Jesus being tempted and ends on a high mountain from where he ascends to heaven. Just let us think of a few examples.

In the Gospel for the 1st Sunday of Lent (Matt.4:1-12) Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread to satisfy his hunger, he is challenged to perform a miracle and he is offered untold power and riches, and he uses scripture to confound the Devil each time.

Perhaps this is a sign to us that we should use the power of the Word to reject Satan when we too are tempted.

For the 2nd Sunday of Lent (Matt 17:1-9) we have the well-known account of the Transfiguration. I am not sure what it means but the order to onlookers not to tell of it until after he has risen from the dead gives a sign of who he is and what is to come.

On the 3rd Sunday (John 4:5-52) we hear the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. Whole books have been written about this event but I focus on the mention of the Samaritans worshipping on a mountain. Jesus tells her that worship should be 'in spirit and in truth' Do we worship in that way?



The Gospels for Sundays 4 and 5, the stories of the healing of the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus are not concerned with high places but for reflective purposes they are perhaps amongst the most important in the New Testament.

Since I wrote all of the above, I have been overtaken by events with which you all will be familiar. Masses are cancelled and the social part of our Church life has virtually ended for now. We have to fall back on those spiritual resources which flow from our Christian practice. If I were asked to suggest one thing to help in this situation it would be – read the Psalms. There are 150 and at the rate of one a day the worst may be over before you have finished.

One final thought. On the cross Jesus is quoted as saying the opening line of Psalm 21. Read the last 4 verses and you will see a message of hope rising from the despair of the Cross. That is the climax of the Paschal Mystery, it ends with Resurrection.

Frank Bowe



She recognised Him in the calling of her name

St John's Gospel tells us that Mary Magdalene was the first person to encounter Jesus after his resurrection. She sees Jesus but does not recognise him. Jesus asks "Woman, why are you weeping". Supposing him to be the gardener she said to him, "Sir if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away".

How did she not recognise him? Were her eyes so full of tears? Perhaps she is staring into the bright light of dawn and Jesus' body is silhouetted against the light, making him hard to recognise.

Whatever the reason for Mary's inability to recognise Jesus, what follows is one of the most tender passages in the whole gospel. Jesus said to her "Mary". She turned and said to him in Hebrew "Rabbouni". Imagine how she must have felt, hearing that familiar voice speak her name.

Only when Jesus speaks her name does Mary know him. At first she couldn't

recognise him, but Mary knew that distinctive voice: the voice that called her to wholeness when it expelled whatever demons troubled her: the voice that welcomed her into

his circle of friends: the voice that told her she was valued in God's eyes: the voice that cried out in pain from the cross. Mary knew that voice because it was a voice that had spoken to her in love. Then she knew who it was. Sometimes seeing is not believing, but loving is.

Often we learn to recognise the voice of God in our lives only gradually. In time we learn to listen for that voice in our hearts: it becomes easier to identify, and when we hear it clearly, it is easier to answer. God's voice calls us to be who we are meant to be. It called Peter from his nets at the Sea of



Galilee, Matthew from his tax collector's booth, Bartimaeus from the roadside, Zacchaeus from the sycamore tree – and Mary Magdalene from whatever had kept her unfree. The good shepherd knows his sheep and his sheep know his voice.

The words above are taken from an article originally published by Thinking Faith, the on-line journal of the Jesuits in Britain at www.thinkingfaith.org, and is included here with their kind permission.

Later in this issue of the Parish Quarterly we report on our Parish Lenten initiative "The God who speaks".

Mary Magdalene's story clearly bears out the fact that if we truly listen we will recognise His voice and hear what God is saying to each one of us, through the Scriptures, through our prayers and through our everyday encounters with those around us.

Joe McGuinness

Otley Night Shelter 2020

We held our second Otley Nightshelter for destitute asylum seekers between 2nd March and 16th March, in the empty Salvation Army building.

We hosted 9 asylum seekers, 3 of whom we knew from last year.

We had 30 new volunteers, and 40 who had helped last year. The roles they filled were preparing the building including cleaning, putting up beds, doing personal laundry and offering showers in their own homes. The daily roles were cooking breakfasts and cleaning, socialising in the evening – although playing games was not as popular as last year, cooking an evening meal and night sleeping. The people of Otley responded enthusiastically, as last year. The new volunteers were a bit apprehensive but enjoyed this new venture and expressed a desire to do more next year!

We did struggle a bit to find night sleepers, especially during the second week, but things worked out well, people rallied and some new

volunteers offered at the last minute, so we were able to fill all the slots.

£1,400 was raised through the generosity of the churches which was used for the guests bus passes, some pocket money and fresh food supplies. We were also able to give a donation to the Salvation Army for the use of their building and WYDAN (West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Network) for their funds.

We were able to keep the shelter open all day on the 2 Sundays this year, which helped the guests as they could stay round the Otley area instead of going into Leeds. Two went to a local church service and one went on a walk round the Swinsty reservoir organised by one of our volunteers. Some did English lessons with one of the volunteers.



We were pleased with the success of the nightshelter.

All in all we had a busy fortnight, made new friends and enjoyed working across the churches.

David and Isabel Evans



Risen Christ

No one expected your return.
You astonished your disciples
When you slipped from the tomb.
You came extending peace,
Offering forgiveness for denial,
Extending faith to the doubtful.
You met them on the seashore,
And on the road towards home.
Each one's grieving heart overjoyed:
Each one's closed mind opened wide.

Taken from "Fragments of your Ancient Name" (2011)
by Sr Joyce Rupp. Used by permission of Sorin Books



Prayer of Spiritual Communion

Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus, I believe that you are present
in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things
and I passionately desire to receive you
into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you
sacramentally,
come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you
now and forever.

Amen.

Sheeana in Nepal

Hi! To those of you who might not know me, my name is Sheeana (I'm Beth Street's eldest daughter, and I'm sure many of you know her.) There's a picture of me to the right, with my Nepali host mum and my counterpart, Tikeshwari. In February, I left the UK to work in Nepal for an International Non-Government Organisation called Restless Development. I had a three month placement there, which was unfortunately cut short in late March - we were promptly evacuated back home due to the spread of COVID-19 in the UK. So my trip came to an abrupt and stressful end, which obviously is far from ideal. But what happened whilst I was there?

First, a bit of background to the story. Nepal is renowned for not only being home to some of the most beautiful natural landscapes to ever exist, but also for its ancient culture. It is home to twelve major languages and forty-three castes of people (as reported in 2001). It's social structure is largely based around that of Hinduism - which 82% of the population follows - with many influences from Tibetan Buddhism. Restless Development is a UK headquartered INGO who focuses on youth-led international development through intercultural partnership.



My supervisors, my team leader colleagues, the volunteers - everyone was under the age of 30. Of the volunteers that made up the three teams I was leading, most people were 20 years old.

For many of our volunteers - UK and Nepali - it would be the first time they had ever undertaken a project that required such in-depth intercultural work. Many UK volunteers worried about making friends with their Nepali counterparts; the people they were about to be with 24/7. Truth be told, I too was a bit worried. What if my counterpart's English wasn't very good and we struggled to communicate? It would be a disaster to lead our teams as a pair. Turns out Tikeshwari and I are now great friends, and there was nothing to be worried about at all. That's a great lesson in itself - don't make assumptions about things you know nothing about.

“*... a priceless opportunity*”

My three teams were based in the most rural area from the seven teams on our placement, in an area of Nepal called Manhankal Rural Municipality. Each team had common targets; for example, how many school sessions each team needed to do, using teaching projects approved by the government of Nepal - however each team's projects were ultimately largely different.



The main areas of concern were centred around gender-based discrimination, mental health and rural enterprise such as farming. See right for a photo of one of my team's women's empowerment event for International Women's Day.

Unfortunately, as a team leader I didn't get much opportunity to get hands on with these projects. Tikeshwari and I had more of a role planning the projects rather than executing them, as well as the pastoral care of the volunteers. Speaking of my own experience, there were many things that I am hugely proud of, but also many that need improvement. I had gone with the intention of learning to be a leader, but had often fallen into the trap of becoming a manager. Respect takes time, and I had hoped to win that from my teams - unfortunately, I never got the chance to.

“ *the most beautiful natural landscapes to ever exist* ”

It reminds me of a line from an old Buddhist parable I was told by our homestay owner Sarita on my second night in Nepal - “everything you do is your life's work - your actions, your words and your thoughts. The work you do now are seeds for the future. Only you can decide if these seeds are good or bad, and how deep they are planted.” My trip might have come to an abrupt end and left many wishes unfulfilled, but it was still an unforgettable experience that taught me much about myself. My privilege as a Westerner and my inexperience as a leader has given me much food for thought. I am happy to be home safe with my family, unlike many British people stranded abroad.



And to come back to Sarita's seeds - I still had a priceless opportunity to build a foundation for many skills I'll need in the future. I hope my teams got as much out of it as I did.

Thank you for your support, generosity and prayers. I hope you are all keeping safe and well during these difficult and challenging times.

Sheeana Street



My Ministry: my privilege

Shortly after moving into the area I attended Mass for the first time and was greeted by Fr. Tom. We spoke for a few minutes and I introduced myself. The following week when I was leaving church Fr. Tom greeted me by name, the effect that had on me was immediate, I knew then I was in a special community, I felt I had "come home".

Time passed and Fr Tom invited me to become a Eucharistic minister. My initial reaction was of surprise and disbelief. I thought that he'd mixed me up with some holy, religious parishioner which

I certainly wasn't. After the shock subsided, I felt humbled and privileged to be considered to undertake this role but not sure that I was up to it. It involved me attending some group training with others to prepare me for my duties then a Rite of Commission. After that I was given a rota and "let loose" amongst you!

Being a Eucharistic Minister involves me in being part of a team with a commitment to attending Mass three out of four Sundays; to assist Father in distributing Holy Communion twice a month at 11.15 am Mass, and visiting the sick and



housebound members of the parish once a month after 9.30am Mass. Usually when you are at Mass you watch people performing their duties and it looks seamless and very easy. However, initially I was very nervous and seemed to spend much of Mass worrying about when I should leave my bench and what would I do if I fell over carrying the Blessed Sacrament? But you will be pleased to know so far, so good.

Visiting the housebound has been a highlight of Eucharistic Ministry for me. For several reasons, one being finding my way around Otley, but mainly and seriously, I have met the most delightful, interesting, cross section of people. I am welcomed into their homes and am privileged to enable them to share in our Mass by bringing them the Eucharist, and showing our support as a parish community. Every visit is different but what is constant is the faith and fortitude they show coping with their problems. I really enjoy after praying together we can have a chat and get to know each other, I feel that I benefit more than they do.

My spiritual life is all the richer for becoming a Eucharistic Minister. **Anne Robinson**

If you are interested in becoming a Eucharistic Minister, please let Fr Lawrie know.

The God Who Speaks

"Scripture is at the centre of everything the Church does. The Word of God shapes our prayer and worship." (CBCEW) The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) dedicated 2020 as a year of focus on the Bible and invited people to engage with 'The God Who Speaks'.

*"... listening with the heart,
allowing God to steer your heart
as He speaks to you "*

At the beginning of the year Fr Lawrie and a small group from the parish felt that one way of responding to this invitation was to meet in Lent to reflect on the Gospel for the coming Sunday. A choice of sessions was organised in the parish centre, and an invitation to everyone in the parish was placed in the bulletin.

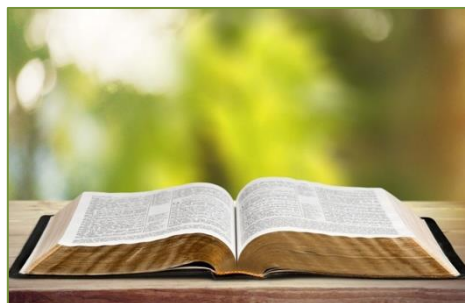
In each session there was the opportunity to read, reflect, share thoughts and pray with the gospel passage for the coming Sunday. This way of praying with Scripture is known as Lectio Divina which means 'Divine Word' or 'Godly Reading'. It is a very simple but enlightening way to engage with Scripture. A **Lectio Divina** session begins with the gospel passage being read aloud. The invitation is to listen rather than follow the text. People are invited to take particular notice of any word, phrase, image or question that

stands out for them. There is then a short period of silence for individual reflection followed by an invitation to speak aloud the word, phrase, image or question that caught each person's attention. There is no discussion at this point – we simply **listen** to one another's contribution.

*" The stillness
of the sessions ... struck me "*

Then the gospel passage is read by a different voice and after another short period of silence there is open discussion of how the passage has spoken to the people gathered. The session concludes with a time of prayer. A number of parishioners gathered for all of the sessions during the second and third weeks of Lent when we reflected on the Transfiguration and the Samaritan Woman at the Well. The insights and sharing were very varied and we were all enriched by hearing one another's thoughts and reflections.

*" The discussion time gave us all
fresh understanding "*



The feedback from the groups has been very positive. In our present strange situation of lockdown and isolation our Lectio Divina groups felt they would like to continue and so we have set up an email group to reflect together on the upcoming Sunday Gospel. If anyone would like to be part of this group please contact Joe at joemcguinness@btinternet.com or Linda at lindapenn15@icloud.com

If you don't have a missal at home the Mass readings can be found on the Universalis website: universalis.com

Linda Pennington

Please pray for:

Baptisms

**Sebastian James Keinhorst,
Sidney Jax Bellwood
Marguerite Carolyn
Mary Stoddart-Scott.**

Recently Deceased

**Liz Brown
Dennis Crane
Wyn Dawson
Ann Jackson
Rowena MacDonald
Maureen Smith
Christine Waterhouse
John Weir**

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen*