

## Holy Saturday'25

I am not convinced you need a sermon tonight! But I have chosen two poems to celebrate this great Feast of Easter. My first one (for this congregation only) is simply called 'Easter Song' by that wonderful priest-poet, George Herbert. It was set to music by Vaughan Williams as the second of his 'Five Mystical Songs' and I cannot recommend it too highly – the rich baritone verse I heard on You Tube had a light orchestral background until the final line of the final verse when I simply jumped out of my seat at the loud triumphant climax! There was no mistaking the Resurrection had already dawned, and Christ had gone ahead of us while we slept.

I Got me flowers to straw Thy way,  
I got me boughs off many a tree;  
But thou wast up by break of day,  
And brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee.

The sunne arising in the East,  
Though he give light, and th'East perfume,  
If they should offer to contest  
With Thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,  
Though many sunnes to shine endeavour?  
We count three hundred, but we misse:  
There is but one, and that one ever.

The poet sees this day of Christ's resurrection as one of unsurpassed glory. 'Can there be any day but this?' The sun that rises each day of the year cannot shine as brightly as the Son of God as He brings light to the world. This day is the most important day of all time and for all eternity. "I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End." As we rejoice in this small church, we rejoice with the vast company of heaven and our Songs of 'Alleluia', our noisy 'Gloria in Excelsis' are co-

united in faith, hope, and love. These Alleluias echo, resound, and bounce off one another so to speak, in order that Christ's life and death can finally be understood, affirmed and believed in. There is no hiding the Easter hope and Easter glory which God keeps on giving. I am very much looking forward to hearing Sarah's new composition at the end of our liturgy as I am also looking forward to my first glass of wine since Shrove Tuesday! But even more than that, I pray with you: for all our different communities in this part of Suffolk, that the message of Easter is never drowned out as if it was 'old news' or for that matter, by-passed completely.

Undoubtedly, we do need to work much harder at sharing our faith with others and passing it on. Someone cynically whispered to me at yesterdays 'Churches Together' Good Friday Walk of Witness – 'those young people must all be from Quay Street' - as if all the other churches represented are just ancient fossils! I don't think the comment is lost on any of us, but perhaps we need to put more time and energy in letting those younger than us take on positions of greater responsibility in the life of our churches, and not accept the answer that they are too busy or, conversely, bored with the Easter Song we are singing. No, our shared pilgrimage for every age group is surely to welcome the Light of our Risen Lord which alone can transform the darkness of our neglects and sorrows. This shared light can create something wonderfully new and attractive – an Easter faith which literally shines out as a beacon, and draws others into our worshipping life, our extended family life, and our community life.

When our love is generous and not selfish, when our love is forgiving and not proud, and when we recognize Christ here in our midst, we can truly feel our hearts uplifted. So let's be encouraged and bold to sing and pray for a more hopeful, believing, and joyful world.

Alleluia, Christ is risen...!