

## PARISH OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS Goring Way

12.04.2020

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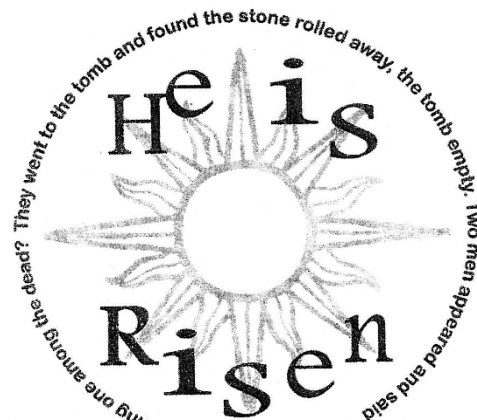
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### Easter Sunday

#### ***Masses will be celebrated without a congregation***

Holy Saturday	11 <sup>th</sup>	The Parish
Easter Sunday	12 <sup>th</sup>	Barry O'Shea RIP
Monday	13 <sup>th</sup>	Reg Snr & Dorrie Marshall RIP
Tuesday	14 <sup>th</sup>	The Parish
Wednesday	15 <sup>th</sup>	Audrée Price RIP
Thursday	16 <sup>th</sup>	John Furlong RIP
Friday	17 <sup>th</sup>	Muriel Burns RIP
Saturday	18 <sup>th</sup>	Frances McCann RIP
Sunday	19 <sup>th</sup>	John & Joan Rattigan RIP



**TODAY'S READINGS:** Acts 10:34, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20: 1-9

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Acts 4:42-47; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:** Rose Little, Albert Davitt, Lelia Murray, Nicholas & Mary Murphy, Anne Steere, Anthony Canneaux, Lawrence Brownlee, Margaret Birch, Lita Yong, Patrick Ryan, Brenda Peazold, Mary Wessel, Gina Palermo, Elizabeth Hoskins, Joan Cutmore, Christine Watson, Gordon Milne, Alfred Deacon, Roni Horstead, Ronnie Tyler, Jenny Begley, Bill Hogg, Breda Schlimgen, Michaela Finn, Winifred Lyons, Yvette Allen, Kerry McStravick, Lydia Van Melsen

**2. THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:** **BYRON WYNN-DAVIS, EDITH GIBBS, KATHLEEN KEOHANE** and those whose anniversaries occur about now: Herbert Hasney, Gerry Donnelly, William McGlynn, Patricia Jones, Mary La Roche, John Clarke, Margaret McCarthy, Vincent Devereux, John Russell, Joseph Liston,  
*May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

**3. GIFT AID ENVELOPES:** Worry not if you have run out of envelopes! The new envelopes are in the church and awaiting the weekend that we can all return to Mass.

**FATHER LIAM SAYS:** How sad it is that we cannot come together especially at this time. Families and friends find all kinds of ways of keeping in touch and we are assisted so brilliantly by modern technology in enabling us to do this.

The very word 'church' means 'the assembly' – those who are called together. We have been gathered together by Christ. Though we cannot come together physically at this time we still are united. By baptism we are all brothers and sisters of the Risen Lord who has promised to be with us forever – until the end of time. And his Word is true. He has Risen precisely because he wishes to remain with us always. He has Risen not for his own glory but to share his eternal glory with us.

The traditional greeting of Eastern-rite Christians when they meet at Easter is 'The Lord is Risen' to which the reply is 'He is truly Risen'. How much more expressive this is than our own tame 'Happy Easter'. The Word Easter is derived from the name of the Saxon goddess Eastre – the divinity of the dawn and the name has continued among us – like such names as Thursday – long after the heathen goddess has been forgotten. All other Christians call the feast of Christ's Resurrection by some modification of pascha, the term which the Church uses when it speaks of the Paschal mystery. Pascha is of Jewish origin reminding us that the saving death and resurrection of Jesus was the fulfilment of the great Jewish event of the Passover, when the Jews were led out of slavery in Egypt.

In the words of St Paul 'Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed.' (1Cor5:7) The very word 'Jesus' means 'Saviour' because he has delivered all mankind from the servitude of sin.

In Western Christianity the dominant image of the Resurrection was the empty tomb but in the East the emphasis was on Christ surrounded by heavenly light, offering new life to all humanity. The icon reproduced on the front page reflects this understanding of the significance of the Resurrection. The earliest version of the story depicted in the icon is found in a homily for Holy Saturday that is thought to go back to the second century and forms part of the Office of Readings for that day: 'Today Christ goes seeking out that lost sheep, our first parent. He wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free imprisoned Adam and his fellow prisoner Eve from their pain. He who is God and Adam's Son.'

The icon shows Adam and Eve rising from their tombs. Christ is taking each of them by the hand to lead them into his new life. Beneath Christ are the two doors of the underworld shattered and thrown open. They are now in the form of a cross and this cross is the stepping-stone across the abyss. All around this bridge to new life that Christ has provided for us we see the fetters and jailers' tools that can imprison humanity. This visit by the Risen Lord to free these prisoners is referred to in the Apostles' Creed in the words 'he descended into hell'. For a few years before the present translation came in we used the words 'he descended to the dead.' How much more meaningful that was. It reflects the message in the First Letter of St Peter where it says of Christ: 'He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison who in former times did not obey...For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead so that though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.' (3:19;4:6) This theme of Christ's descent into the underworld was particularly developed in the Eastern Christian tradition. In Medieval English Mystery Plays it was known as 'Christ's Harrowing of Hell.' It refers to the ancient Christian belief that Christ preached the good news of salvation to those who lived before his coming and were awaiting their redemption. 'Harrowing' in that phrase 'The Harrowing of Hell' does not refer to anguish or suffering of any kind but has the meaning of 'robbing' as if Christ raided the abode of the underworld so as to rescue those who had been waiting for him.

Look again at the icon of the Resurrection – 'Anastasis', the word written in Greek in red letters at the top means 'standing up again'. Jesus is standing up again victorious over death and he helps Adam and Eve and all of us to stand upright too. Look carefully at the gates of the underworld – the gates of hell – transformed into the cross that leads from death to life. Christ is standing firmly and triumphantly on the cross of victory. Underneath the cross, the enemy lies bound, the 'strong man' who has held humanity in bondage. Evil is defeated, its effects are limited and we proclaim that his reign will pass away. Resurrection is about something that is happening now and in the future.

The ancient Holy Saturday homily continues: "The Lord goes to them holding his victorious weapon, the cross. When Adam sees him he cries out to all around: 'The Lord be with you all' and the Christ replies to Adam 'and also with you'. Then grasping Adam's hand he lifts him up and says: 'Awake, O sleeper and arise from the dead and the Christ will give you light. I am your God who for your sake became your Son. For you and your descendants I now command those in prison: 'Come out' and command those in darkness: 'Have light' and I command those who sleep: 'Rise'."

This ancient homily and this icon are telling us that the 'Standing up again' is about what Christ does for all humanity. On the left are the representations of all who have waited for the Lord's coming while on the right we have those who have followed Jesus.

At this time we are very conscious of those who are suffering greatly in mind and body and who know the pain of isolation and fear, and feel abandoned maybe even by God. Jesus on the cross experienced the 'living hell' of being in agony and feeling utterly abandoned by most of his friends. Even the Father seemed distant! His words: 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me' were spoken from a space of utter desolation and emptiness. He knows what so many people are going through. He himself has experienced far worse. But there is no suffering that he cannot transform into a path leading to him. Jesus is praying the psalm of a suffering person – Psalm 22 – who, although feeling abandoned by God continues to cry to him. We sense that person's strong relationship with God in the face of intense suffering as he longs to proclaim God's name in the midst of the people and in the midst of his own desolation.

I came across this short poem by Miriam Kessler:

'My God, My God' he cried,  
If he is quoted right.  
Somehow that moan is comforting  
To us alone at night,  
Who tremble, daring dawn,  
That He, so wise and strong  
Should weep and ask for aid.  
Somehow, my lovely distant God  
It makes me less afraid.'  
(*'Eli, Eli' in 'Cries of the Spirit'*)

Wishing you all  
God's blessing and strength  
at this sacred time,  
Mr. Liam.

### **These are the hands by Michael Rosen**

These are the hands  
That touch us first  
Feel your head  
Find the pulse  
And make your bed.

These are the hands  
That tap your back  
Test the skin  
Hold your arm  
Wheel the bin  
Change the bulb  
Fix the drip  
Pour the jug  
Replace your hip.

These are the hands  
That fill the bath  
Mop the floor  
Flick the switch  
Soothe the sore  
Burn the swabs  
Give us a jab  
Throw out sharps  
Design the lab.

And these are the hands  
That stop the leaks  
Empty the pan  
Wipe the pipes  
Carry the can  
Clamp the veins  
Make the cast  
Log the dose  
And touch us last.