



## St Paul's Church, Rondebosch

Parish Newsletter

# CARITAS

April 2019

The earth of our souls has been weeded and forked. Seeds were planted, tiny like grains of sand, flecks of dust. They were watered. Tiny shoots appeared, bits of life flourishing on our own dirt, our manure.

Seeds, whether planted in earthly soils or spiritual souls, seeds which appear to be dead, when watered by sorrow and tears, come miraculously to **LIFE**.

The people of St Paul's were privileged to have been given a full preparation for Easter, especially on Wednesday evenings and in Holy Week. The presentation of the Ten Commandments by Sister Joan Chittister was so relevant to the present time that we were all affected – and I wish some of our politicians could have heard it! If you get a chance to see the DVDs, take it. When you read this, you will have already experienced most of Holy Week – Stations of the Cross, the Taizé service, the Celtic Eucharist, and the Maundy Thursday “washing of the feet”, stripping the altar and sharing Gethsemane in the Lady Chapel.

WE ARE PRIVILEGED to be part of these wonderful symbolic ceremonies, some so old that they are ancient. Few people in this world, even in our Anglican Churches, are given such a wealth of liturgy, such opportunities for meditation and worship. We dare not waste them and we can try to share them.

So ... at Easter time we pray especially for all in pain, in distress, perhaps facing death, enduring their own personal crucifixions – because the promise of joy and life is true. Death has been conquered.

Defeat may serve as well as victory  
To shake the soul and let the glory out.  
When the great oak is straining in the wind,  
The boughs drink in new beauty, and the trunk  
Sends down a deeper root on the windward side.  
Only the soul that knows the mighty grief  
Can know the mighty rapture. Sorrows come  
To stretch our spaces in the heart of joy.

During Holy Week we accompanied Jesus to a sort of rubbish-dump place called Golgotha, outside Jerusalem, where criminals were crucified. We joined in worship in the manner of Taizé with meditation and music (thank you, Karen). The Celtic Eucharist reminded us of ancient tradition when every time and action of the day has its appropriate prayer.

The Holy Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, when we washed each other's feet, and the stripping of the altar, was frightening, ominous. Could this really happen? And then we watched with Jesus in prayer in the Lady Chapel, remembering the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Good Friday:** 9.30 a.m. Family service.

12-3 p.m. Three-hour devotion.

Some of you will have heard, years ago, Richard Simons singing The Reproaches, an experience of weeping never to be forgotten – like so much of the Passion music of Bach and Stainer and others.

**EASTER VIGIL 6 a.m. on Sunday** waiting in darkness “before it was yet light” – and then the first fire is lit. In historical evolution the discovery of fire was the most definitive step of human development. Now we have a new fire, a new dawn, a new definitive step, the first sign of resurrected light, Christ alive ... and this too is not magic but real.

**EASTER DAY 9 a.m.** with Alleluias

We can also remember all those people who sing in choirs at Easter-time, including those performing The Messiah in the City Hall. Hallelujah! I hope that it is broadcast because those concerts sell out quickly.

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# TAIZÉ

This community of prayer was founded in 1940 soon after World War II had begun. Brother Roger, a Swiss, was the founder. Taizé is a small town in Burgundy, now a centre for prayer and reconciliation shared by Protestants and Catholics. The monks, the “brothers”, about 100 of them, are celibate, living very simply in contemplative worship. There was controversy about national loyalties during that terrible time of war, particularly in that part of France. Members of the Vichy government were regarded as traitors. The Resistance was amazingly active. No one felt safe. But Taizé was there for everyone, for all political persuasions, and was actually built by young Germans, members of Action Reconciliation for Peace. Taizé is a symbol of reconciliation between divided Christians and separated peoples – it is especially loved by young people, who flock there in their hundreds to seek healing and peace in their lives. Karin Bromberger, who for some time led Taizé services at St Andrew’s in Newlands, will lead our service in Holy Week.

It would be good to have such meditative services more often than just once a year!

What do you think?

In Cape Town, Taizé will be active on the following dates:

22–25 August: a weekend of friendship between young Christians and Muslims.

25 Aug – 1 Sept: a reflection week for young people, volunteers, job-seekers and young professionals aged 18–33 years old.

Environmental issues will be high on the agenda.

## In Rondebosch **A Pilgrimage of Trust 25–29 September**

has been planned for young people 18–35 years of age from all over the world as they seek paths of hope. 24 years ago they met in Johannesburg, 11 years ago in Kenya, 6 years ago in Rwanda, 3 years ago in Benin. Now it is the turn for Cape Town as, again, young people from southern Africa are invited to celebrate their faith together, to witness together. **3500 young people are going to need accommodation for that week – all offers gratefully received.**

## HOW TO WE GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER IN OUR OWN CHURCH?

Our church, our parish, should be like a family

On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March, all parishioners were invited to meet to share ideas of what St Paul's might become in the future. One of the points made was that we should try to build one Christian family out of the three separate congregations that have formed around our Sunday morning services at 8, 9.30 and 11 o'clock. Most people who worship at these different times simply do not know the people who attend the other services.

It was suggested that, once a month, we should have a combined service at 9 a.m. so that we can come together as a family. This idea was discussed later by the parish council and they agreed with the idea. They suggested that the first combined service should be on 16<sup>th</sup> June and, after that, on the last Sunday of the month – at 9 a.m. because that is when we have had combined services before. We shall try this for 6 months, until the end of November, to see if it works!

At these services, we will aim to grow our spiritual experience – we may arrange some readings as dialogue and we can extend our music repertoire. Of course we shall not throw out our familiar hymns and anthems but there has been a huge development of hymns and spiritual songs since 1983, 36 years ago, when the red hymn book was published. It is about time that we began to learn some of the new hymns and songs! We also realise that some people do not like, and may not know, the older hymns and that they do not resonate with that kind of music because they come from far more varied backgrounds than in the past. The truth is that we are all losers if only one music genre is used in church. We shall try to introduce more recent music – but it will be carefully and sensitively chosen.

Sadly, it is true that some of our regular worshippers do not come to a combined service because it is not at their usual time, even on a special occasion like the Patronal Festival. To you we say, please reconsider and re-schedule your timetable!

**We ask all of you to try to attend the monthly combined services until the end of November.**

Our model of the worshipping community can be found in St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 12 vv 12–31, plus his well-known description of love in action. Read it to get an idea of what our dream is for St Paul's. If you agree, please come and worship with us.

If you disagree or have problems with this or, better still, have good ideas, please let us know. Suggestions are welcome.

## **GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE : Pope Francis July 2018**

The number of people fleeing violence and war has broken all records, but is often seen as a lesser issue compared to the grave bio-ethical problems in our world ... but serving the needy, “particularly migrants who risk their lives to offer a future to their children”, is exactly what Jesus demands of us – in welcoming the stranger we welcome Him.

Long reflection is needed by Christians - to listen to what God is calling them to do with their lives. We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty. We are never completely ourselves unless we belong to a people. That is why no one is saved alone, as an isolated individual.

Commenting on the words of the Lord’s prayer – deliver us from evil – a more exact translation would be “the evil one”, a personal being who assails us (like Screwtape, created by C S Lewis). Jesus taught us to ask daily for deliverance from him lest his power prevail over us. How can we know if something comes from the Holy Spirit or if it stems from the world or the devil? The only way is through discernment, which is more than just intelligence or common sense. It involves striving for all that is great, better and more beautiful, while at the same time being concerned for the little things, for each day’s responsibilities.

Pope Francis identifies new forms of sinister and ancient heresies – one which stresses improving oneself through knowledge or insight and another which says we can earn salvation through prayer or good works! “When somebody has an answer for every question, it is a sign that they are not on the right road.” God infinitely transcends us; we are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter Him. Someone who wants everything to be clear presumes to control God.

Contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God’s people: in parents who raise their children with immense love, in men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick and the elderly who never lose their **Something is missing here – faith?**

- We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love wherever we find ourselves.
- This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures.
- We are an army of the forgiven. All of us have been looked upon with divine compassion.

- How does man best show God's love? By works of mercy towards our neighbour – by sacrifices and gifts which are not for our own benefit. (St Thomas Aquinas)
- Christian joy is usually accompanied by a sense of humour.
- The saints surprise us because by their lives they urge us to abandon a dull and dreary mediocrity.

Each person finds his own way. Listen to God and recognise the signs He gives you. He is full of surprises. We are not the ones to determine when and how we will encounter him.

South Africa, as a country, is going through a very bad time, perhaps the worst it has ever known, particularly in the townships. Strikes, taxi wars, gang terrorism, arson and intimidation of all kinds have become commonplace – indeed, violence has become the norm. Although we who live in Rondebosch can walk down the street without fear, this has become impossible for one who lives, say, in Delft. One can expect this to get worse during the next few weeks because people can use politics as an excuse for terrible violence. Their anger can be understood, but the violence and terror cannot be condoned. [Personally, I often cannot bear to watch the news. Ed.]

### **What can we do?**

First of all, **we must pray.**

The Intercessions on Palm Sunday followed the injunction of Archbishop Makgoba to pray for our own country, in particular for our elections on 8<sup>th</sup> May.

**God of compassion and hope**

**ruling above all earthly structures of governance:**

**Guide the people of this nation now called to elect their leaders,  
that the parties may present their manifestos with honesty and clarity,  
that the voters may cast their votes in safety and with confidence,  
and that those responsible for the elections will work efficiently  
to ensure that the result will be accepted by all parties  
and the new government supported as they seek to build one nation  
in which all can exercise the gifts that they will offer  
and use for the greater good.**

**This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

We can also try this ...

**“Small gestures”!!!** Pope Francis mentioned them in his encyclical and we heard Sr Joan Chittister talk about them too. Most of us are not called to develop amazing works. We do not have to stand on a soap-box or do grand things – we

can just look out for simple ways in ordinary life to be kind, to listen to problems, to show sympathy, to give a helping hand, to smile, to be friendly. Every encounter can have meaning, however small. Sometimes it will take a little extra time or trouble. Sometimes it will be no more than letting the other car go first, or asking the tired cashier how she is feeling, or thanking the waiter for his help. It is so easy to dash around, getting one's own "things" done, while ignoring the person who is right there.

It is very important to **use your vote**. Many people fought for that right. Ordinary men and women did not have any say in government until quite recently and it is less than 100 years since women were allowed to vote.

Your Lenten offerings will be used in the **Rector's Discretionary Fund**.

Remember that most of the people living around our church are not well off. There are many who are pensioners and many who are students. People who were able, 20 years ago, to rent a room or a little flat here, now find that the cost has risen so much that they cannot survive. They need regular help.

Parcels of basic groceries are delivered to those in need each month – many of you give generously either in money or groceries for this cause. Thank you so much. But there are often other expenses, or there is a shortfall, or there is an emergency when extra help is needed. The Rector is usually the first person to be asked for help and, however generous she may be, it is just not possible to pay out what is required so the Discretionary Fund is essential.

Thank you, therefore, all of you who "did without" during Lent and gave your money to the parish. Now you know that it will be used to help pay someone's rent, or get a train ticket to work, or buy some electricity ... or whatever !?!

## **THE BELL**

The matter of repairing the bell has not been forgotten. It is not sure what the trouble is but, hopefully, repair will not be too expensive. The problem is in getting there, whether by scaffolding or cherry-picker. When it rings again, it will remind all of us in the busy-ness of our lives, to pray for our country and its desperate needs.

**The FOOD FAIR  
Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May  
in the hall**

**(obviously NOT in the church)**

**Anyone who lives has to eat.**

**Anyone who eats has to cook.**

**Anyone who cooks has to know how to cook.**

**Anyone who cooks has to make the time to do so!**

**And then has to wash up ...**

**So take this opportunity to get a ready-cooked supper  
enjoying good company**

**and**

**to take home a few meals to enjoy during the weekend!**

**There will be books on sale as well, so it is food for the body and mind.**

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Contributions received with thanks at the A/C St Paul's, Standard Bank, Rondebosch, 71488928