



St Paul's Church, Rondebosch

Parish Newsletter

CARITAS

May 2017

GOD surprises!

Can you just imagine it? Jesus Himself appeared in a locked room, then He was suddenly making breakfast on the beach. He walked with them, He had supper with them. To cap it all He was then swept away in heavenly vision leaving behind a bunch of bewildered but believing disciples. Amazed, they met and talked and worried, ate together, wept and rejoiced as they recalled all that their Jesus had told them - but they were all puzzled beyond words, because all the ordinary earthly rules had been broken and these happenings were beyond reason. They had abandoned their old lives to follow him. Now what? What was going to happen next? He "ascended into heaven" - beyond human comprehension and very confusing.

Thomas a Becket (according to T S Eliot) declares – "I have had a tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven, a whisper . . ." The boundary of human awareness is tissue thin, whether a vision or the dream which "dies at the opening day". Although often aware of "other" life, we cannot define it. It is neither above nor below, past or future, now or then. In past times "they" were witches, angels, ghosts, fairies, demons, ancestors, gods . . . we just know that there is a world beyond our rational conscious selves, and every now and then we have a glimpse of it. Carl Jung's *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* describes this well. Our resurrected Lord opens the way to this other life, culminating in His Ascension. This left the disciples very faithful but also puzzled, at a loose end and rather flat, until God sent yet another surprise . . .

FIRE! the Holy Spirit.

The discovery of fire was pivotal to evolution and early man knew that fire must be cherished, must never be allowed to go out. Fire warms us, comforts us, prepares our food, draws us together, gives us light, it is infectious and lighting others. It is the power, the fuel, that drives us, perhaps even on a road strange to us.

Fire = energy. God has sent us His Fire, the Holy Spirit, His power, His warmth, His comfort, His drive, and it is as pivotal to our spiritual life as earthly fire was to the development of mankind. The word “enthusiasm” means “filled with God’s energy within”.

But we have to listen to what the Spirit says. First He says, BE QUIET and stop doing all the talking. You cannot hear Me if your mind is not empty and quiet and attentive. WAIT for me. Be ready for me. You are my servant, my child, my love. You love me. I return your love. My gift to you is the fire of my Spirit. I fill you with my Spirit. God speaking is intensely personal. What does He say? Is He calling you for something? He may tell you to do something so easy or obvious that it is hard to believe Him. Could that be all He wants from me? It seems ridiculously easy. By contrast, it might be something that seems impossibly difficult, new, strange, putting your life “on the line”. Does He really mean it? It seems impossible. The answer is to obey Him. Disregard Him and I risk my soul.

*Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire and lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art, who dost Thy heavenly gifts impart.*

*Thy blessed unction from above is comfort, life and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light the dullness of our blinded sight.*

*Anoint and cheer our soiled face with the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home. Where thou art guide no ill can come.*

*Teach us to know the Father, Son, and Thee, of both, to be but one,
That through the ages, all along, this may be our endless song.
Hail to thine eternal merit - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

Although this is often sung at Compline, it also makes a good walking song. Walking and listening to God works well. The “El Camino” is a pilgrimage of 800 Km across northern Spain, over the Pyrenees and through peasant farms, ending in Santiago at the Compostella. St Geronimo, or St James, is the patron saint of Spain.

Shirley MacLaine, such a great actress, wrote a book about her pilgrimage. Her experience is fascinating because it breaks through the boundaries of time and ordinary consciousness - although regular Anglicans could find all kinds of theological faults in her thinking. She found that the habits and belongings of modern living became unnecessary. “I became more and more aware of what Einstein had always claimed, that there is no such thing as linear time; we invented it . . . a problem of perception . . . I was not locked into linear reality . . . was connected to God (the source, creation) . . . a totality of experience that was connected to God.” Her dreams are detailed, alive and vivid, the spiritual life more real than the blisters, dust and hunger of the journey. The book is there, in the porch, for anyone to borrow – though the writing may not, perhaps, be to everyone’s taste.

There are long spiritual walks being undertaken in this country nowadays and perhaps we should hear more about them. If anyone has information about this, please let me know. I have heard of some in the Eastern Cape. It should not be necessary to travel to Spain.

We know that the disciples of long ago walked long distances, talking and thinking – very often about their terrible politics, just like us! Jesus Himself walked all over the country. Schoolchildren in the country often have to walk several Km to school every day. Here in the city we are so accustomed to cars, seatbelts, traffic jams, robots, taxis – traffic - that we have lost the way of walking and this is not only a loss to our physical health, it is also a loss to our thinking time, our meditation time. It is not easy to meditate in a traffic jam!

The notice is on our board, but did I really notice it? The “Lenten appeal” – Eluvukweni

There were good rains in Cape Town in the 1980s, which was good for gardens but very bad for people living in shanties, like the camp which suddenly grew near the crossing of the Klipfontein and Lansdowne Roads, far out beyond the old cement factory. The “government” did not like this camp. Every now and then attempts were made to raze it to the ground. Casspirs would invade with teargas to drive the people out. Uniformed men would pile up belongings in heaps and set them on fire, those pathetic blankets and bits of cardboard piled in heaps and set alight, while weeping women clutched their big-eyed babies. Fr David Russell lay down in front of the front-end-loaders (remember them?) with his arms outstretched, defying them to run him over. That was Crossroads.

Dr Ivan Toms studied medicine at UCT in the 1970s and was a very active member of Ansoc, greatly influenced by the Anglican chaplaincy. He was a young man with enormous energy and compassion. He refused army conscription as a conscientious objector. He inspired the parish of St John’s, Wynberg to support, indeed to finance, a Clinic in Crossroads and, though I don’t know how they found the money, it happened! It was a ramshackle building, little more than a shed itself, painted blue – corrugated iron, bits of wood – and the staff were dedicated to serve. There were a couple of good “Sisters” and many volunteers, some of whom came from overseas because they had heard about this extraordinary work. Kupugani, inspired by Ray Carter (whose husband John had been UCT Anglican Chaplain) brought wonder boxes and healthy food. Dr Mary Roberts developed a nutrition clinic for the babies. Professor Maurice Kibel was inspired to bring medical students there to help and learn and, most importantly, to liaise with the Red Cross Children’s Hospital. It was a hive of activity.

Nothing remains now, perhaps not even the memory. The whole area is township-cum-shanties. Father Dano met me at the BP service station to drive me along a tarred road to Eluvukweni Church. It is a low flat building on a good-sized corner plot, opposite a primary school on one side and the open ground being prepared for new houses on the other. Inside there are rows of chairs. It is an oven in summer and a deep-freeze in winter! The “office” is about the size of a garden shed, and that’s all. Obviously there is nowhere for a Sunday school – children go outside.

Eluvukweni = Resurrection. Maybe I am wrong, but my understanding of the construction of this word implies not just Christ’s resurrection but **our** resurrection. It is a ‘plural’ word. The congregation includes many people who remain faithful to the church but who have **moved** away, out of Crossroads, to better living – but not

even half of them are working and earning. Most are on grants and, of course, there are many children. They have managed to engage the interest and some financial support from a church in Washington, USA. It would be good to join the Eluvukweni congregation for their Eucharist one Sunday at 9 a.m., not necessarily to do anything but simply to share and learn and meet each other.

OUR PARISH

WELCOME to new members on the Parish Council:
Linda Louw, Frank Makoza, and James Amooore.
May God guide you for the work in this parish.

Oh, give me your pity, I'm on a committee,
which means that from morning to night
We attend, and amend, and contend, and defend,
without a conclusion in sight.

We confer and concur, we defer and demur,
and reiterate all of our thoughts.
We revise the agenda with frequent addenda,
and consider a load of reports.
We compose and propose, we suppose and oppose,
and the points of procedure are fun!
But though various motions are brought up as notions,
there's terribly little gets done!

We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve,
since it's out of the question for us.
What a shattering pity to end our committee,
where else could we make such a fuss?

(Surely the PCC is not like this! Perhaps Parliament? Ed.)

St Paul was really not keen on giving women their proper status - it is, in a way, ironic that the churchwardens of St Paul's Parish church are all women who have all pursued careers which involved great responsibilities during their working lives – and of course our parish secretary is a woman too! The congregation thanks them for all they do – Carol Hartley, Val Heighway, Lesley Munro and Arlene Christian.

Besides our “Interim” Priest, we are blessed to have the continuing help of Fr Clive McBride, Rev Erica Murray, Rev Pat v d Rheede, and Fr Ivan Weiss. In particular we thank them for their ministry to people who cannot get to church. Some are on our regular prayer list. Thank you to all of you.

COMINGS

WELCOME to **Elliot Pillay Chapman**
the newly born son of Vareshni and James.
CONGRATULATIONS on your safe arrival. Happy Landings and
may you all get enough sleep.

GOING?

We wish Jill Rainier-Pope an easy journey, family gatherings full of love, good health, and trouble-free happiness while she travels around the world during the next few months. May God go with you.

THE CHURCH GROUNDS

There have been complaints that homeless people congregate on the broken bench opposite the olive grove, eating and drinking and lounging . . . and leaving their rubbish. Our neighbours, the ones who live above the church, use that pathway to get to the shops. They do not like to walk there if there are vagrants around because they feel threatened. This problem will not be solved by a fence!! Some kind of community action, “together” action, is needed. Any offer of suggestion or other help would be welcome.

The **GSCID** (Groote Schuur Community Improvement District) welcomes a new manager, Nina Farrell - whom I have not yet met. The retiring manager, who had already retired from his professional job when he took on this one, is Anthony Davies. Anthony, a member of the Church of England in South Africa, openly declared his service to our Lord, Jesus Christ and we thank him for his work here at St Paul’s. After renewing Claremont, he was transferred to this area and, last year, he brought the “working homeless” teams to clean up our grounds, from the olive grove to the far corner of the graveyard. It took them over two weeks.

THE FOOD FAIR

Friday 2nd June p.m. 6 – 9 p.m.

is a great happening in the Rondebosch parish. Enid-the-indefatigable has been getting donations of food and equipment and money, engaging cooks who will produce their best dishes, and putting out leaflets so that people living around here will know about the Fair and will come to sample us.

*Although the weather's changing, Lord
And wintry winds now blow.
We thank you for this scrumptious food*

And all the friends we know!

So everyone, please cook your best for this occasion and bring it to sell and to eat.

Come hungry! **BRING YOUR NEIGHBOURS, YOUR FRIENDS**, even people who are not your friends. This is an event for Rondebosch, the whole village.

Students!! Come and stock up your fridges with meals . . . home-cooked.

[Just out of interest . . . the **books** which many of you so kindly brought, are still there in the Hall, ready for sale. It is hoped to have more book-cases, which would be very helpful. There is no secondhand bookshop in Rondebosch, so it may be worth continuing to have books available for sale . . . when the Hall is in use. So please do not throw your books away. If you are clearing out, please do so in this direction! Jumble too . . . because there is a possibility of a Jumble Sale later in the year.]

And here is a heart-warmer! Lavender Hill is beyond Retreat, a settlement of uninspiring flats in uninspiring blocks which were erected to house some of the families evicted from District 6 more than 50 years ago. Drugs and drink dominate. Did you know that "Tik" can be made from Jik, Handy Andy, Vim and the like? Well, just for a change, a young woman there is teaching children how to knit. It is not only the girls who come, it is the boys too, and they get there early, waiting for her to begin classes long before she is ready for them. They love it. They are making scarves and bed-socks and blankets, either for themselves or for the old people. It has become the "in" thing. Knitting! Love it. Wool and needles and patterns would be appreciated.

From Father Jim

Dear Friends at St Paul,

Easter has come and gone but we continue in Eastertide. We rejoice in the hope of the resurrection because Jesus has been raised by the power of the Creator God. Now we anticipate Ascension and Pentecost. These two festivals are important and we must continue to observe them, notwithstanding how secularism has encroached on Ascension Day. My concern is not so much that Ascension Day is off the public holiday calendar, but that many churches no longer celebrate the day. I will be encouraging the PC to ensure Ascension be a regular service of worship.

Ascension closes Jesus' earthly ministry and anticipates Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Ascension re-iterates the big picture of Jesus' incarnation, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. It is a reminder that Jesus has returned bodily to the Father. Jesus is "our man in heaven" (pardon the play on Graham Greene's famous title). And because Jesus has gone before us, he is preparing a dwelling for us in the presence of God and the saints. Just how that will be, I think Scripture is unclear. The best interpretation I can suggest is that we will be with God, wherever God is.

Pentecost, on the other hand, because it falls on a Sunday, is faithfully celebrated year by year. Pentecost reminds us that Jesus is still with us but in a different form: Spirit instead of Physical. The Holy Spirit is "another Helper, just like Me", and dwells in us. Rejoice!

Further, the Spirit gives gifts, both virtues and abilities. The Holy Spirit pours out love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23), on the one hand. On the other, from Rom 12 and elsewhere, preaching, serving, teaching, exhortation, leadership, mercy, generosity, music, insight, and many other gifts and graces, equally come from the Holy Spirit.

It is my prayer that all of us will daily covenant to grow in God's grace, love, and skills for the glory of God and the blessing to humanity.

My thanks to all of you for what you do for God and others.

Sincerely

Fr Jim

Father Jim is visiting as many of the St Paul's people as he can. Please make sure that we have your home details on our lists so that you can be included. It is very important that you phone him or the office if you actually need a visit or if you get sick or have any emergency or need spiritual help AT ANY TIME! So LET US KNOW! THANKS.

Emergency Numbers:

Interim Rector: Revd Jim Harris

Assistant Priest: Revd Darron Misplon,

St Paul's office: Ph 021 6894720 email: stpauls@netdial.co.za

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