

St Laurence  
Church Magazine  
Easter 2016



## The Resurrection and the Life

The Church is very good at promising things for the future. It's not just politicians who offer jam tomorrow – very often, you hear Christians too deferring things to the next life.

Four days after Mary of Bethany's brother Lazarus died, Jesus arrived at her house to offer his condolences (John, ch 11). He offered the sort of sympathy any of us might give in similar circumstances, when there is really nothing we can say: 'You know your brother will rise again.' We all know the feeling, when the best we can offer to someone who has been bereaved is something along the lines of 'he's only waiting for you, around the corner somewhere in heaven.'

Mary is impatient with this conventional consolation. 'Yes,' she says, 'I know that he will rise again – at the last day.' But clearly, she is hoping for something better, something sooner, something more concrete than that vague promise of a 'last day,' whenever or wherever it may be.

At this point, Jesus gently leads her to a remarkable understanding of who he is, and how he enshrines his message: the Gospel is not just the words he says, but the person that he is – something that ordinarily she would not even have dreamt of. Jesus says simply: 'I am (the) Resurrection.' He then follows this up: 'I am (the) Resurrection, and I am (the) life; whoever believes in me though they die, they will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.'

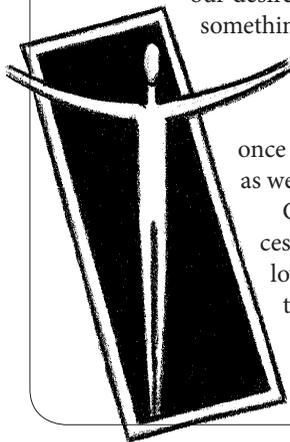
Jesus has come not just to *tell* us about the Resurrection life that God brings to human beings, but more than that: he *is* that new life, here and now. No need to defer the fullness of life until some end time that may or may not happen after death or at the end of the world: eternal life is now, for anyone who encounters the presence of Jesus. Even today, anyone who hears the voice of Jesus in the words of scripture, or is fed by his body and blood at the eucharist, or finds his presence in the midst of his people in church or in the poor, has discovered true Resurrection Life.

And, as if in proof of this, Jesus proceeds to perhaps his greatest miracle: he brings Lazarus back from the dead. This physical resurrection of a dead body is the fulfilment of an ancient human dream – that our loved ones might somehow be brought back to life – but, as so often, Jesus takes a natural human yearning and transforms it: he takes our desire for life, for love, for an end to heartbreak – and redirects it into something both more realistic and more profound: the knowledge that even in the midst of death, we are in life. Finally, it's not so much Lazarus as Mary who experiences resurrection. The Resurrection is now, even in the midst of death, even as we devote ourselves once more to bringing God's love to bear on the rough old world, even as we know full well that we shall inevitably fail.

God's love revealed in Jesus is finally unstoppable, always gently successful; despite our sins and shortcomings and inevitable death, God's love brushes away our sense of failure, in every moment illuminating the hearts of those who love and serve him with Resurrection joy.

And so for those who have experienced Jesus' presence, it's jam today – or jam not at all.

Fr Charles



# PILGRIMAGE TO GHANA

12<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015



This pilgrimage was organised by Fr Andrew and along with Fr Hugo and seven members of the Mothers' Union, we started our journey after attending Mass at 7.30 am. We then went by mini bus to Heathrow Airport and checked in for a 11.45 flight to Amsterdam and then to Accra arriving at 20.00

During the pilgrimage we were privileged to have David as our very able driver to ferry us around the various places. Thank you David.

On 13<sup>th</sup> October we then went to Cape Coast which was about 4 hours drive, after lunch we travelled to Hans Cottage Botel and stayed there for 3 nights .

On 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> October we visited Cape Coast Castle Anglican Seminary and looked around Cape Coast and visited Elmina Castle and the fishing village, some of us also visited the Hakum Forest Reserve. We then had lunch and went back to the Hotel for the evening meal.

On 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October we travelled to Kumasi which was about six hours drive and stayed at the Presbyterian Guest House for four nights. We went on various visits including the Cultural Centre, and the Mampong Babies Home which was founded in 1967 and is situated in the Ashanti region two hours north of Kumasi. The Home began at first in a pre-fab bungalow and later in a purpose built children block home. The Home is managed and funded by the Anglican Diocese of Kumasi. The Home can currently hold up to 50 children but is facing overcrowding and need for expansion.

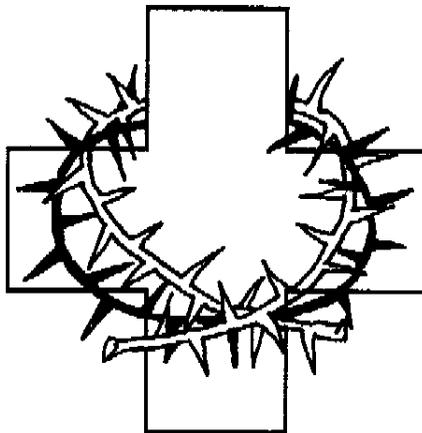
On 18<sup>th</sup> October we visited the Anglican Parishes, St Peter's Asawasi to see the Ladies in Christ team (which the MU currently sponsors), the All Saints Anglican Church Asokwa where we worshipped and was warmly welcomed by all.

On 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> October we travelled to Accra, sightseeing, shopping, visited the Craft Market and the Anglican Cathedral.



Throughout the pilgrimage Mass was celebrated separately each morning by Fr Andrew and Fr Hugo with each member of the group joining in with the intercessions. We wish to thank Fr Andrew for arranging the pilgrimage which was most enjoyable and we thank Fr Hugo for accompanying us; the pilgrimage gave us a lot to think about and to appreciate how lucky we are after experiencing what we witnessed and we continue to pray for the people of Ghana, may God bless them.

*Daphne Moore & Florence Browne-Mark*



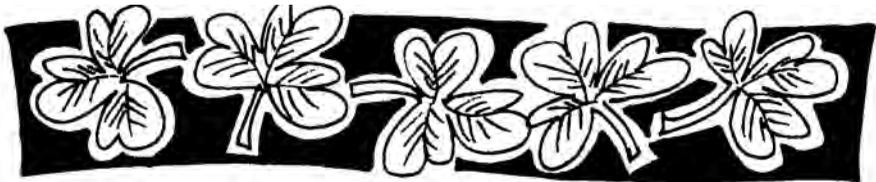


## Maundy Thursday – time to wash feet

Maundy Thursday is famous for two things. The first is one of the final acts that Jesus did before his death: the washing of his own disciples' feet. (see John 13) Jesus washed his disciples' feet for a purpose: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." His disciples were to love through service, not domination, of one another.

In Latin, the opening phrase of this sentence is 'mandatum novum do vobis'. The word 'maundy' is thus a corruption of the Latin 'mandatum' (or command). The ceremony of the 'washing of the feet' of members of the congregation came to be an important part of the liturgy (regular worship) of the medieval church, symbolising the humility of the clergy, in obedience to the example of Christ.

But Thursday was also important because it was on that night that Jesus first introduced the Lord's Supper, or what we nowadays call Holy Communion. Jesus and his close friends had met in a secret upper room to share the Passover meal together - for the last time. And there Jesus transformed the Passover into the Lord's Supper, saying, 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' as he, the Lamb of God, prepared to die for the sins of the whole world. John's gospel makes it clear that the Last Supper took place the evening BEFORE the regular Passover meal, and that later Jesus died at the same time that the Passover lambs were killed.





Come back  
to me  
with all  
your heart,

Come back to me with all your heart,  
don't let fear keep us apart.  
Trees do bend, tho' straight and tall;  
so must we to others' call.

*Long have I waited for your coming  
home to me and living deeply our new life.*

The wilderness will lead you  
to your heart where I will speak.  
Integrity and justice  
with tenderness you shall know.

*Long have I waited for your coming  
home to me and living deeply our new life.*

You shall sleep secure with peace;  
faithfulness will be your joy.

*Long have I waited for your coming  
home to me and living deeply our new life.*

# He died to set us free....



Nailed to the  
Cross.  
Excruciating  
pain.  
Hands held high.  
Bloodied thorn-  
crazed head  
hangs low...  
Jeers and insults  
pierce flesh,  
exacerbating  
rejection and  
physical agony.

But - there is  
no Cross.  
Arms are high in  
Resurrection  
praise and  
worship.

Light fills the  
Body reaching  
out into voids of  
sin-filled pain  
and darkness...

Bringing peace,  
forgiveness,  
freedom, joy...

To all who  
believe and  
receive - life  
and light  
for all  
eternity.

**Read more in Matthew 27: 32-50; Romans 10: 8-13**

*Drawing by William Mather, based on his oil painting 'The Yellow Christ' at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire.*

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**Bible Sketchbook**

# Jesus and the thieves on the Cross

Luke's account of the crucifixion (Luke 23:32-43) emphasises the mocking of the crowd, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself' (35,37,39). In their view a Messiah did not hang on a cross and suffer. In considering the two men who were crucified with Jesus, we are also confronted with the issue of how Jesus secures salvation for us.

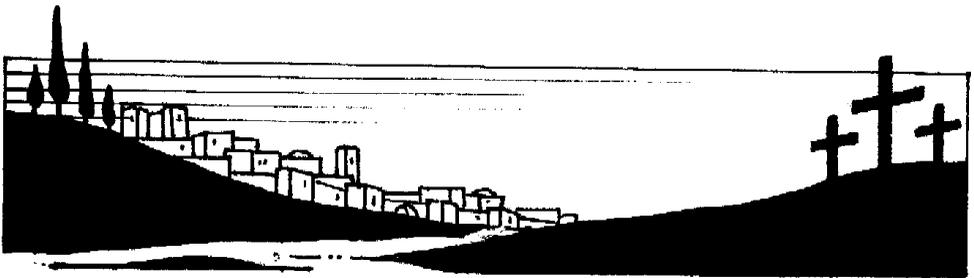
The words of one of those crucified with Jesus reflected the crowd's taunts: 'Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us.' He highlights the question of Jesus' identity: how can He save others, when He cannot save himself from death? He failed to see that the cross itself was the means of salvation.

So - what kind of Messiah was Jesus?

The other criminal's response in his last moments is a moving expression of faith. When challenging the other man, he spoke of the utter injustice of the crucifixion: 'this man has done nothing wrong.' He perceived the truth that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. In a wonderful picture of grace, 'remember me when you come into your kingdom', the second thief confessed his guilt and secured Jesus' forgiveness and mercy.

In reply, Jesus promised the man life from the moment of death; 'Today you will be with me in paradise.' Jesus used the picture of a walled garden to help the man understand his promise of protection and security in God's love and acceptance eternally.

Each one of us has to choose how we react to Jesus on the cross. Do we want him to 'remember' us when He comes into his kingdom, or not? If you were to die tonight, how confident would you be of going to be with Jesus? 'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.' (1 Peter 3:18).





## HOLY WEEK

Holy Week is the week before Easter Day; it starts with Palm Sunday which is on 20th March this year. Palm Sunday is when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.



The Thursday of Holy Week is called Maundy Thursday which is named for the words that Jesus used at his last meal with the disciples, what we now call the Last Supper. The Latin words are 'Madatum novum da vobis' – a new commandment I give you'. Do you know what that commandment is? You can read the whole account in St John's Gospel, chapter 13.

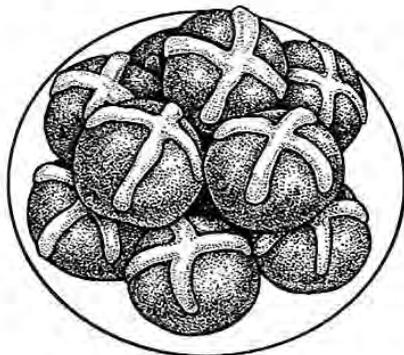
Then comes Good Friday - a lot of people can't see why a day that commemorates the trial and crucifixion of Jesus could be called 'good'. It was a black day but Christians know that without what happened that Friday there would be no Easter. Without the death of our Lord there would have been no empty tomb on Easter Day, no glorious Resurrection.

## HOT CROSS BUNS

One of the pleasures of Easter is eating hot cross buns. Like most things they cost more now than they did in this old rhyme...

Hot Cross Buns,  
Hot Cross Buns,  
One a penny, two a penny,  
Hot Cross Buns.  
If you have no daughters,  
Give them to your sons,  
One a penny, two a penny,  
Hot Cross Buns.

If you have some time to spare, see how many words you can make from the letters in the words HOT CROSS BUNS. Words of at least 3 letters, no plurals, proper names or foreign words.



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**What do you get when you pour boiling water down a rabbit hole?**

A hot cross bunny.

**Why couldn't the rabbit fly home for Easter?**

He didn't have the hare fare.

# Looking for the Resurrection

An older couple were driving down the motorway when the wife got a frantic call from their daughter. ‘Mum, watch out! Some lunatic is driving a car the wrong way down your motorway!’ The wife warns her husband, who is driving. He replies tensely: ‘One lunatic? There are hundreds of them!’ What we see is determined by our perspective on life.

In the Nicene Creed we say ‘We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.’ In the gospel accounts of the Resurrection there is a lot of looking and seeing. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome went early to the tomb. They saw the stone rolled aside and inside the tomb a young man dressed in white said to them: ‘Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him . . . He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him’ (Mark 16: 6,7).

Like the women we would probably have been left ‘trembling and bewildered’ by what we saw that morning. Had the body been taken? Was the young man an angel or deceiver? Was Jesus raised to life again, or was this an elaborate hoax?

Easter gives us a choice. We can approach life looking for disappointment, fear and despair. Or we look for Resurrection and find not just an empty tomb, but encounter the living Christ. He continues to meet people in their daily lives bringing new hope, forgiveness of sin, healing and wholeness and the assurance of his presence through the darkest of times.

God invites us to see our lives differently and look for Christ’s Resurrection life at work in our lives and the people around us.

*Paul Hardingham*



# Resurrection

(John 20:1-18)

Even in the darkness

Still she went,

Stumbling, longing for light,

Finding a stone-moved emptiness.

Then her running

And the running and out-running of the men,

The believing whilst not understanding,

The tears and the angels with questions and messages.

Death transformed to Life

In the turning,

And revelation in a name,

Mary!

Lord, sometimes I don't understand

And the world seems dark,

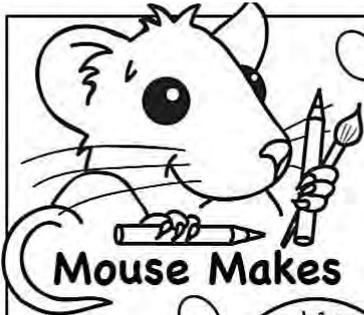
But I choose to turn from darkness to you.

Speak my name Lord,

Hold me safe

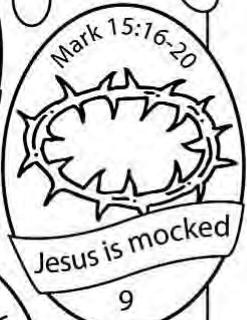
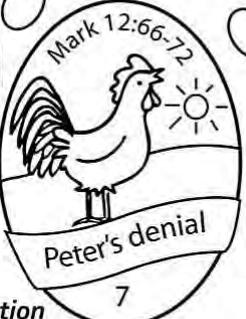
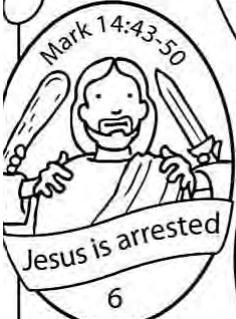
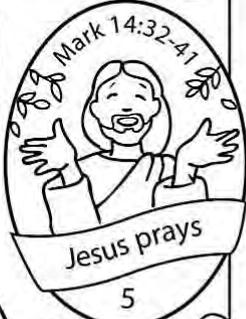
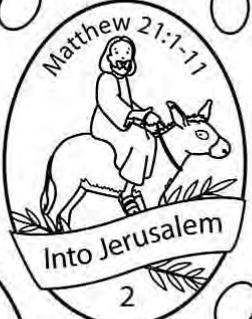
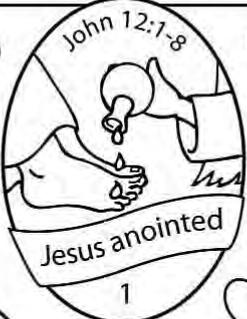
In your resurrection power and light.

*Daphne Kitching*

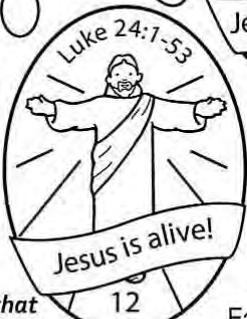
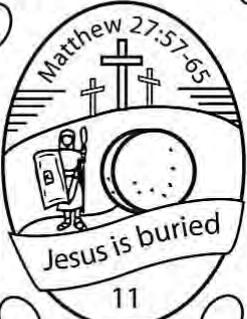


Easter Story Eggs

Each big egg tells a part of the Easter story. Colour them in then look up the bible verses.



Jesus said:  
**"I am the resurrection and the life"**  
 John 11:25



Jesus said:  
**"I will come and get you so that you can always be with me"** John 14:3

Cut out the big eggs. Glue onto card and use them for a bible story Easter egg hunt.

# Thomas - Believe it and be blessed

If I were to mention the names of certain disciples to you and ask you to write down the first word that comes into your mind, it is unlikely you would all come up with the same words. However if I were to mention the name of Judas many of you would write down the word “betray”. If I were to mention Simon Peter, some of you would write down the word “faith,”. But if I were to mention the word Thomas, there is little question about the word most everyone would write down. It would be the word doubt. Indeed, so closely have we associated Thomas with this word, that we have coined a phrase to describe him: “Doubting Thomas.”

Have you ever said something which you later regretted, or which later came back to haunt you? Well Thomas certainly did? Have you ever been called a ‘Doubting Thomas’ for sounding doubts when someone has a new idea, and can’t believe anyone can’t see that it is the most wonderful thing since the first Easter Day?

We call Thomas a doubter, just because he would not believe that someone whom he had seen die a horrible death on the cross three days before, had come back to life! When the disciples told Thomas that they had seen the risen Jesus, he uttered those famous words ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’ ‘Oh, Doubting Thomas’

Mary had gone to the tomb and returned to say she had seen Jesus, and he was alive. I wonder how many of the disciples had believed her. Indeed Luke’s account tells us, ‘But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them’. It would seem that Thomas was not the only doubter that day. Not the only one who had to see to believe!

We do not know why Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared to the ten in the upper room.

When he returns to the room, the disciples impart there news ‘We have seen the Lord’ they keep repeating to him. How did he feel? Angry that they should play such a mean trick on him? Foolish, for having gone out? Resentful, that Jesus appeared to them when he wasn’t there? We must remember that Thomas was a man who dealt in facts. He saw things plain and simple. It was he who when Jesus said ‘you know the way to the place where I am going,’ replied, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” to which Jesus in turn replied, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life”. Thomas questioned things he didn’t understand. He wanted clarification. He wanted to see clearly. He asked the questions that all the disciples were thinking of, but were afraid to ask.

We do know though that he didn't lack courage. Remember this is the Thomas that on the road to Jerusalem announced to the twelve 'Then let us go so that we may die with him'. It was a courageous statement, yet we don't remember him for that. We also fail to remember that this is the Thomas' who in the all the Gospels states the Divinity of Christ most bluntly and unequivocally. We overlook Thomas making an earth shattering confession of faith? Look at his confession, "My Lord, and my God." Not teacher. Not Messiah. But God! It is the only place where Jesus is called God without qualification of any kind. It is uttered with conviction as if Thomas was simply recognizing a fact, just as  $2 + 2 = 4$ . You are my Lord and my God! These are certainly not the words of a doubter. But it is not that action that gives Thomas his infamous nickname, his lasting reputation. It is his questioning, his doubting.

So what does the story of Thomas say to us today? I think that we should be heartened by his example. I think if Thomas were a member of this congregation, he would be a most avid attendee of bible studies, a member of house group, doing correspondence courses and attending lectures, seeking all the time to know more and more about his faith, about his God. Seeking still to answer those questions to clarify what he does not understand, seeking to ask the questions that everybody wants to ask, but nobody else will ask.

Yet the story of Thomas also contains some warnings. First of these is conditional belief ..'If only I see this' or 'If only God will do this', then I will. We cannot make conditions with God, all we can do is to surrender ourselves, and our situations into God's hands and let him resolve them as he sees fit. Secondly, Thomas and the disciples were very fortunate, they saw the risen Christ, and they experienced the resurrection in the flesh! There are many today, who say 'if I could see the risen Christ, then I would believe'. Conditional belief again, but also a demand for absolute proof. We, although we do experience the presence of the risen Christ, are not in that fortunate position. Yet speaking through the ages, Christ has words for us today. Jesus said to Thomas, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Being prepared to keep on our own faith journey, where often we have to hold to that which we cannot see, cannot prove, in the face of that which we can see and can prove, is a challenge for all Christians. As we journey along we must remember that doubt and questioning is a healthy part of faith as long as it is part of the mechanism for growth and does not become a barrier to God. Many people today won't believe that Jesus really rose from the grave because they haven't seen him with their own eyes, but it is true whether they believe it or not! You and I have never seen the risen Jesus; we can only accept him by faith.

Believe it and be blessed!            Amen

*Br. Peter*

## ‘He gave us eyes to see them’ - railings and kneelers

This time we visit St Nicholas’ Church, Compton in Surrey. It is a very fine building with an unusual double sanctuary on two floors at the east end. Our eyes look up to see a gallery and an altar, and then at ground level is another altar surrounded by a glorious Norman arch with Jacobean railings and kneelers. As we enter this church, we realise with T S Eliot in ‘Little Gidding’ that we are here ‘to kneel where prayer has been valid.’

With the liturgical reform of the last century, it is customary in many churches to stand to receive Holy Communion. Sitting and standing seem the norms now for worship in spite of all the beautifully embroidered kneelers that many churches boast. But open the Book of Common Prayer, and there is a multitude of rubrics on kneeling whenever people gather for services. It is a posture that takes us back to those vivid images of Jesus praying on his knees in St Luke’s Gospel, Peter kneeling to pray in Lydda, and the people kneeling on the beach with Paul in Acts 21.

The Psalmist invites us to kneel before the Lord our Maker, and Paul wrote to the Philippians, ‘At the name of Jesus every knee should bend.’ As we kneel at the Jacobean railings of St Nicholas, Compton or in our own churches, we are heirs to that tradition. Cranmer in the Prayer Book said that kneeling was a sign of gratitude for benefits received. But it is more than that. Buildings like Compton church bring us to our knees quite naturally as we gaze and wonder at the beauty and majesty of the building. Kneeling is a sign of reverence and adoration of the God who inspired such architecture of old and who feeds us now in the sacraments.



# St Richard of Chichester

## wanting God more clearly, dearly and nearly

Ever wonder where the prayer . . . ‘May I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, and follow thee more nearly, day by day’ comes from? Richard of Chichester, a bishop in the 13th century, wrote it.

He began life as Richard de Wych of Droitwich, the son of a yeoman farmer. But Richard was a studious boy, and after helping his father on the farm for several years, refused an advantageous offer of marriage, and instead made his way to Oxford, and later to Paris and Bologna to study canon law.

In 1235 he returned to Oxford, and was soon appointed Chancellor, where he supported Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his struggles against King Henry III’s misuse of Church funds. After further study to become a priest, Richard was in due course made a bishop himself. He was greatly loved. He was charitable and accessible, both stern and merciful to sinners, extraordinarily generous to those stricken by famine, and a brilliant legislator of his diocese. He decreed that the sacraments were to be administered without payment, Mass celebrated in dignified conditions, the clergy to be chaste, to practise residence, and to wear clerical dress. The laity was obliged to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days, and to know by heart the Hail Mary as well as the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed.

Richard was also prominent in preaching the Crusade, which he saw as a call to reopen the Holy Land to pilgrims, not as a political expedition. He died at Dover on 3 April 1253. In art, Richard of Chichester is represented with a chalice at his feet, in memory of his having once dropped the chalice at Mass! One ancient English church is dedicated to him.

And, of course, he is author of that famous prayer, now set to popular music, which runs in full:

“Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ for all the benefits thou hast given me, for all the pains and insults which thou hast borne for me. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and follow thee more nearly, day by day.”

St Richard’s feast day is celebrated on April 3rd

# Help the Bunny Find the Eggs

