



St Theresa's Presbytery
High Lane
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Monday of Easter Octave 2020

Dear Friends

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!

Well we managed to get through what has been the strangest Holy Week on record. We are now in the wonderful Easter Season and things are still very strange. The one problem that I have in being in lockdown is the amount of time I have to worry about things, and worry I do – it's a part of my nature unfortunately! The questions of what will happen if... There have been so many of them, and those that I can find answers for all include the answer - well if that happens we will just have to cope as best we can, because that is what we are doing right now, every single one of us. Coping as best we can with the situation we find ourselves in, and knowing that we have no real control over world events.

What I have to do is remember what it is we have just celebrated, and what we are celebrating right now, that Christ has Risen, He has conquered sin and death, He has defeated evil, He was won, the victory is His. This is a time to rejoice, and not to live in fear, not to live with 'what if' and 'if only'. Easter changed the world, Christ's death and Resurrection changed the world, things could never be the same again and they are not. Not for the first Disciples and not for us here today.

The Good News of Jesus Christ has brought comfort to those dying of numerous plagues down through the centuries, Spanish Flu in the early 20th Century, those serving on the front lines of war and conflict in every age, and is being proclaimed today during this pandemic. Why? Because it is true and it is Good News! Men and women of faith have taken the Gospel to where it needs to be heard, and at the times it needs to be heard. The Gospel needs to be heard today, Christ's victory over sin and death, God's love for the world needs to be heard here in our parish today. The fear of the unknown, the fear of death and illness needs to be tempered by this good news that we seek to live each day.

Dear friends we are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song, it makes us what we are - brothers and sisters of Christ, sharers of his Gospel. Yes we are having to adapt to this new way of living, I suspect that we will have to change much of what we consider to be normal behaviour for a while to come, but we will still be Christian Witnesses in the world, we will still be active Christians, sharing the Gospel of Christ.

We have not been inactive in this Parish; we have been greatly blessed with active participation in overcoming the considerable obstacles of being the Church in this new situation that we find ourselves in. I would like to thank first of all Deacon Des

for his ministry to me personally and to the Parish. He took on the responsibility of keeping us together and informed, setting up the technological methods of communication including the WhatsApp group and the email list and he has been tireless in making sure that no one 'falls through the gaps' created by this current situation. He has been in the Church every day and taking an active care of all of us in the parish. When the lockdown started the Bishops of England and Wales ordered deacons not to exercise their ministry at the altar for the duration of the crisis. Deacons could not stand at the altar with the bishop or their priests in the parishes in which they serve. As we all know, this would have been Deacon Des's first Holy Week and Easter where his ministry at the altar is completely invaluable. As I looked through the rubrics (the written instructions to clergy on how the liturgies are celebrated) and saw how much the deacon does I blanched! His ministry was greatly missed – but next year will be very different!

Next I would like to thank Clair our Administrator, again her ministry to the parish has been invaluable, updating the website, producing the newsletters, updating the information we produce and send out each week, and keeping me on the straight and narrow, and countless other roles that no one really sees happen but would know immediately if they are not being done. She has gone the extra mile in so many ways during this lockdown – I would like to say a huge thank you to her.

The technical side of things live-streaming Masses etc do not happen by magic, it takes a great deal of knowledge and talent. Again, we are blessed in the parish with people who have this knowledge and talent and I would like to thank Anel and Helen for keeping the Masses and Liturgies on the road and being broadcast. Anel especially has provided much of the hardware involved in livestreaming the Masses. Thank you to them.

A number of parishioners have been responsible for contributing so much to the parish in lockdown, this has happened organically rather than them being tasked with the role. These have included Children's Liturgy materials, First Holy Communion input, meditation material, music input, keeping an eye on our finances, paying the bills, and the list goes on. As I am typing this, and as I have previously mentioned people by name, I suddenly think that I am bound to forget one person who has contributed so much to keeping the show on the road, and I will upset them for not mentioning their names, so please forgive me for not mentioning everyone by name, but know that I am eternally grateful for what you are undertaking.

Finally, I want to thank all of you, for your kind comments, emails, cards, and gifts. Both Deacon Des and I would like to say a huge thank you to all of you, whom it is our honour to serve as your clergy team. These are difficult times, but we can face them with hope and joy because we face them together, and more importantly Christ is Risen Alleluia!

With my love and blessing

Fr Lee