

HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD

Joyfully serving Jesus



Weekly devotions, prayers and news

Third Sunday of Lent

7 March 2021

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God



Dear Friends,

I came across this vivid painting by the artist Peter Koenig of the Cleaning of the Temple, and was struck by not just the drawing of the imagery into everyday 21st century life, even down to coloured doves - a speciality at some wedding celebrations, I understand! It somehow strikes me that we sometimes 'paint' Jesus into a box of our own making (often meek and mild), but here is an understanding of the real flesh and blood Jesus united with our humanity, railing against corruption and calling all to the fulness of life which is found in him.

Following Jesus reveals that our Faith calls us not just into relationship with God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - but with our brothers and sisters in Christ, then overflowing this relational grace into the lives of all whom we meet. Christ reveals the true nature and 'power' of God in giving himself for us in great love on the cross. No wonder Paul talks of 'stumbling blocks' and 'foolishness.' Our human understanding of power is turned upside-down - the true nature of God's love for us is revealed through passion, death and resurrection. Christ is truly the power of God and the wisdom of God for humanity.

With blessings,

Michael

Cleaning the Temple—Peter Koenig (b1939)

Third Sunday of Lent (7 March 2021)

9.45 The Family Eucharist (online only)

6.00 Choral Evensong (online only) Preacher: Kevin Carey

Services during the week:

Wednesday: 10.30am Holy Communion Readings: Deuteronomy 4: 1, 5-9; Matthew 5: 17-19

8.00pm Lent Course (Zoom)

Thursday: 9.00am Holy Communion (Iona/Celtic) Readings: Jeremiah 7: 23-28; Luke 11: 14-23

7.00pm Lent Course (Zoom)

Friday: 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer) Readings: Third Sunday of Lent

3.00pm Lent Course (Zoom)

Next Sunday: Fourth Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday) (14 March 2021)

9.45 The Parish Eucharist (online only)

All services live on Zoom: Click the blue link on the front page of the church website before services, entering a waiting 'area' before joining everyone.

Please check the church website for more details

www.holytrinitycuckfield.org

The Collect Third Sunday of Lent

**Eternal God, give us insight
to discern your will for us,
to give up what harms us,
and to seek the perfection we are promised
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen**

The Post Communion Prayer:

**Merciful Lord,
grant your people grace
to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh and the devil,
and with pure hearts and minds
to follow you, the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Exodus 20: 1-17

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it. Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

I Corinthians 1: 18-25

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.' Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

John 2: 13-22

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.' The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

A thought

Forget Jesus meek and mild in our Gospel reading. Here is a full-blooded Jesus – furious, with whip in hand. He is forceful and radical, and this might make us feel uncomfortable, but the Lord challenges corruption through this action of expelling the money changers and sellers of sacrificial animals and birds from the holiest place. Jesus has moved in the space of a few verses from provider of wine at a wedding feast to challenger of the norm in a way which makes him become the target of those who don't want their cosy lives to be disturbed. Along with this furious scene is an explanation using ambiguity and misunderstanding about the nature of worship. This is one of John's devices to keep us on our toes. The Temple becomes the Temple of Christ's Body, and this challenges us to consider that we are drawn to know the fulness of God's Love is seen not only in sacral acts or ceremonies. This, alas, is sometimes the fault of the Church in locking God into some realm of 'churchiness.' It is through the knowledge that in Jesus *'the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us,'* whilst also remaining in the bosom of the Father. Thus, it is as much in the everyday experience of humanity that the presence of God is seen, as well as in the sacred. We, in the great memorial of Christ's Passion and Death take ordinary things of the earth – bread and wine – and through them are fed and strengthened in the knowledge that we are called to enter a divine conversation with God through worship. We are then sent out into the world, strengthened to challenge situations, proclaim the New Life we know we offer through Jesus Christ, and, above all, to LOVE—as he loves us.

A prayer for this time of anxiety:

God of all compassion, your love never fails. Help us to listen to the tranquility of your presence within our lives, so that we may grow in the knowledge that your Son, Jesus Christ, walks beside us, and your Holy Spirit comforts us at the heart of our being; for you are One God, world without end. Amen

Please remember those for whom we pray:

Immediate need: Barbara Booth, Wendy Boys, Carla Spear, Wendy Hibling, Ben Brindley Codd, Sheila Mitchell, Justine, Graham Hibbert, Joe Eaton

Long Term Need: Young Georgia, Young Joshua, Julia Settle, Young Reggie, Ros Ayling, Wendy, Ann Went, Dave Cox, Jenny, Julie Sadler, Becky & Mark Parker, Tony Burbidge, Christopher, Jenny, Marjorie Chilton, Janet Card, Yvonne Godsmark, George Snashall, Eileen Knight, Mary Todd, Gracie & Lucy Neiff, Reg Ruddock, Heather Hollis, Carol Shepherd **Those in Care Homes:** Anne Norris, Alan Prebble, Stephanie Gilpin, Jill Rockey, Jean Simmons, Mary Watts, Diana Hoile, Ruth Baker

Please remember the recently departed and their families:

In our Book of Remembrance this week we remember: 7th Michael Dunnett, Andrew Ponsford, 8th Bill Packham, Joyce Greg, Shaun Ingram, Grace Mathers, Brian Stevens, Clifford Dennis, Eleanor Kier, William Turner-Inman, 10th Thomas King, 11th David St. Clair Roberts, 12th Hilary Richfield, Audrey Beveridge, 13th Bill Baker, Madelaine Saunders, Norman Carrington, Ivy Markwick, Frederick Hall, Joan Watson