

## St Mary's, Barton-upon-Humber: Readings, prayers and notices for the week April 19 -April 26

### Collects

Almighty Father,  
you have given your only Son to die for our sins  
and to rise again for our justification:  
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness  
that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth;  
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father

Readings: Acts 2.14a, 22–32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1.3–9; John 20.19–31

### Meditation

To appropriate the over-appropriated line from 'Lady Windermere's Fan,' to miss one Whitby Goth Weekend is unfortunate, to miss two is positively careless.' Atrocious weather got in the way of the autumn expedition, and the lockdown has scuppered the one at which I would have been this weekend.

Why on earth am I on about this? Well, the apparent obsession with the wounds of Christ in today's Gospel might seem more at home in the darker reaches of gothic horror than in our celebration of the Resurrection. I've commented before that the New Testament doesn't go down the gory road of a film like 'The Passion of the Christ' as it describes Good Friday, so why does John get all involved with it in his description of the Upper Room?

It strikes me that there's a very good reason. The Gospels are emerging into a world where the stories of the gods taking temporary human form are as commonplace a tale as celebrity marriage bust-ups are in our day. Even if we discount the more disturbing episodes where Jupiter/Zeus forces himself upon various young ladies, the less outrageous traditions are still fundamentally about divine beings floating through our world unchanged, immutable, imperious. Ovid's tale of Baucis and Philemon, the couple who unwittingly offer Jupiter and Mercury hospitality and are rewarded (while the townsfolk who shooed the deities away are suitably destroyed) is a pleasant morality tale about being kind to strangers, but the gods go on their way unaltered by their passing entanglement with humanity.

I had a teacher at school who had drunk deeply at the well of Frazer's 'The Golden Bough', a late Victorian work trying to trace parallels between different religions, the sort of thing which gave rise to the 'Well, all religions are basically the same, aren't they?' comment. The teacher in question dismissed Christianity as being yet another version of the old vegetation gods, perpetually dying in winter and rising again in the spring. Round and round the seasons go, the Greeks even had a word for that perpetual round of time, *chronos*, as in 'chronometer' or 'Chronicle'

Unfortunately for Frazer and his disciples, the eternally scarred God of our faith doesn't fit the category. When the Lord returns from the dead, he still bears the scars of his ordeal. What human beings have done to God, through callousness, through fear, through pride — whatever — is not magically wiped out. For all eternity Christ will be marked by what the human race has done to him. Far from dipping in and out of human life as one might select a different set of clothes from the wardrobe, what happens is resurrected, not simply reversed as if it had never happened.

We know, for example, from the way Luke sets out the story of the Annunciation, that the Christians are using quite shocking reversals of the normal order of things in the Roman world to say what God is like. He works *with* humanity, not *against* it. He *invites*, rather than *seizes*. And he inhabits the whole of the human condition, unprotected against the worst that we can do. And when we do the unthinkable, the unspeakable *he returns to forgive and to heal*.

When Christ appears to his followers — all of whom have played their part in sending him to the cross — he appears, not in vengeance, nor in contempt of their failure, but in compassion and in truth-speaking. He isn't invited back; the disciples don't fall before him pleading with him not to be cross with them; he asks nothing more of them than that they receive the Holy Spirit. God doesn't need calming down or bribing with promises of good behaviour. He has walked as a human being and knows how conflicted we are within.

Later in John's Gospel Peter is challenged three times whether he loves Christ, mirroring the three denials. Peter must face who he is and what he has done, but his cowardice and betrayal of his own promises do not prevent this flawed and frail person being forgiven and trusted by the one whom he let down so badly. Even when we wound, betray and flee the source of life, *the wounded God comes back to find us and restore us*. And in the persistent, unbreakable, single-hearted love of that wounded God of ours, there is hope.

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## For your prayers

**Church:** Chaplains in the NHS. For the ministry of apologetics, helping those with honest doubts; for those with unanswered questions, for ourselves as we seek to commend and defend our faith.

The Church of Ireland

**World:** Health workers, all those involved in keeping essential services running. Our own political leaders. Those charged with peace-keeping and peace-making. The governments & peoples of China, Syria and the Middle East, North Africa. All seeking to resolve the issues surrounding protection of the environment, of infection control and of migrancy.

**Our Community:** Residential/nursing homes & those in sheltered accommodation.

**Those in need:** Those whose lives or livelihoods are endangered by Coronavirus. Those who fear the prospect of isolation. All who live in areas of conflict or tension; the homeless, the poor, the sick, the enslaved, the hungry and the abused. Victims of terrorism.

**Those for whom our prayers are asked:** Melissa Milbourn, Julie Newton, Penny Archer, Vicky Page-Chestney, Kate Eaton, Mike Page-Chestney, Brenda Skinner, Henry Farrow Sally, Abby, Jan, Nell.

**Departed:** Kath Lambert, Ron Fox, Henry Fell. Those who have died as a result of COVID-19 infection, especially those who work in the caring and medical communities.

## Next Sunday – the Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 2.14a, 36–41; Psalm 116.1–3, 10–17; 1 Peter 1.17–23; Luke 24.13–35

## Updates

**Kath Lambert:** We're saddened to announce the death of Kath, a stalwart here from many years until she moved out to Worlaby (she was 'senior' Churchwarden when I was appointed). Obviously funeral arrangements are restricted by the COVID-19 outbreak, but as we give thanks for her life, we pray for her (and George) and for the family. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

**With support from Barton Town Council,** Barton Bike Night, Barton Lions, Barton Rotary, Barton Ukuleles and Wren, the Barton Ropewalk is providing meals to the elderly of Barton. Meals will be provided on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and delivered to the door/outhouse/shed - where ever they can put it to avoid contact.

To book a meal ring the day before on 01652 660380 where you will be offered 2 options of soup and main course, the pudding only has 1 option. The meals come with full heating instructions for microwave or oven.

An example of one of the days last week was:

*Broccoli & Stilton soup*

*Fish Pie or bean lasagne (veg)*

*Lemon Sponge & custard*

The service is free although donations will be accepted.

**Magazine:** we're attempting to keep the mag going as a point of contact – any items for inclusion to the Editor by Monday 20<sup>th</sup> please.

**Foodbank** is still operating, but unable to take donations in the usual manner. We are accepting cash donations to help run things slightly differently during the present situation.

**Those in need.** Please help us keep our intercessions up to date, and let the clergy know of any urgent needs for prayer. Obviously at the moment the usual pastoral work of our ministers, lay and ordained, is rather disrupted but it's still important that we know what's going on. Please do continue to leave requests for prayer – either by email to david.rowett@lincoln.anglican.org, or the phone, or even a note through my door, and encourage others likewise.

## Coronavirus Provisions

Now we can't keep St Mary's open, we'll be relying on a mix of things to keep in touch.

If you have internet access, aside from all the resources on the diocesan website there's also Barton FM's contributions from Fr Robert -

**Weekdays: 8am** – 'Prayer for the Day' - A short comment and prayer (different for each day), which opens the broadcasting day for the radio station.

**Midday** – 'The Lord's Prayer' – styled akin to that heard in Minsters and Cathedrals, The Lord's Prayer is prayed every lunchtime every day of the week.

**10pm (midnight on Weds & Sats)** – 'Night Prayer'

**Sundays: 8am** – 'Morning Prayer' from Common Worship

**Midday** – 'The Lord's Prayer'

**6pm – 'Evening Prayer'** from Common Worship

**10pm** – 'Night Prayer'

All prayers and services are available at all times on Barton FM - search YouTube for Barton FM Radio, where listeners can pick whatever they wish to listen to.

In the porch, on the website and available (we hope) through your letterbox, there's a set of prayers which you (or anyone else) might find helpful or useful, and a short order of worship which can be used in the home as you see fit. You may find it supportive if you pray at the normal time for 'your' church service, be it 8, 9.30 or 6, in the knowledge that other members of St Mary's will be joining you from their own homes. There is also a simple cycle of prayer drawn up for this time, which simply calls to mind different groups caught up in the emergency on a seven-day cycle. All of this can be emailed - if we have your email address!

## There will be an 8.00 service on Sundays on local radio

Our websites and FB pages contains details of how to join others online for prayer, worship, study, and community life. The Diocesan Website in particular carries material of all sorts, and our own website carries a number of resources also. David hopes to get some extra meditative material for Holy Week on to it for Monday

See: [www.lincoln.anglican.org](http://www.lincoln.anglican.org)

[www.stmarysbarnton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysbarnton.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchBarton](https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchBarton)

[www.facebook.com/Bartonparishes/](https://www.facebook.com/Bartonparishes/)