

Revelation 21.1-6

This is one of my favourite passages in the Bible. It is a clear statement of our future life with God who loves us in ways past our imagining. But it has a significant message for us now. It contains a clear affirmation of God's desire for communion with human beings, 'God with us' – the promise of the incarnation, Jesus, very God and very man, will be consummated at the end of time. This central tenet of our faith has often slipped through the cracks of the Church. God-with-us is the primary and only real reason for the existence of the Church. A church that is not seeking communion with God is not a church, but a secular institution with religious trappings. The church that strays from the Lord that seeks her in love is not the bride of Christ. The God who has acted in history through Israel and Jesus Christ reveals to us that history will be fulfilled and perfected with sweet communion between God and the faithful. The hope of communion is also about the compassion of God shown in those wonderful words: 'He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.' All is held by the Lord of time, the alpha and omega who makes all things new and invites all to drink of the water of life, his grace. Let us indeed rejoice and be glad.

Elements of the Mass

Blessing of Eggs

The Easter Egg is an important part of the way we celebrate Easter, whether it be with chocolate ones or decorated ones. It is said they represent the stone that rolled away from Jesus' tomb in the garden. They are also a sign of new life and of the coming resurrection. In the Eastern Orthodox Church during Lent people fast from egg as part of their preparation for Easter. The return of eggs into the diet is something to be celebrated. It is a tradition in many churches to bless eggs to give thanks for the Resurrection and to celebrate new life. Often these eggs are decorated with bright colours. Very often they are dyed red to remind us of the blood of Christ and of a legend in which St Mary Magdalene had a basket of eggs which turned red on her way to the empty tomb. Ask your priest if he will bless eggs during Eastertide and perhaps get people to decorate them, perhaps this could be an activity and competition for the younger members of your congregation.

19th May
2019

Fifth Sunday
of Easter

Love



CS Lewis in *The Four Loves* tells us that 'To love is to be vulnerable' – by loving something or someone we are opening ourselves up to the possibility of disappointment and upset, because our world is sunk in sin, and the first perfection to which we and all creation were formed in, has been marred through our fall. Yet into this darkness shines the love revealed in the death and resurrection of Christ. This love that is manifest in Christ is unfailing and unchanging and offers to us more than we can ever dream of. It is within the love of God that St Augustine tells us our restless hearts find their eternal rest. Be assured that you are known and deeply loved by God, and that whereas the things of this world will fail you, the love we encounter in Christ will never falter or disappoint.

From the Fathers

'This is the way of life: first, thou shalt love the God who made thee, secondly, thy neighbour as thyself: and all things whatsoever thou wouldest not should happen to thee, do not thou to another. The teaching of these words is this: Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast on behalf of those who persecute you: for what thanks will be due to you, if ye love only those who love you? Do not the Gentiles also do the same? But love ye those who hate you, and ye shall not have an enemy.'

From the *Didache* (written between 80-90 AD)