

Reflections for 4th April 2021

Easter Day

On the third day

Last year, for the first time in my life as far as I can remember, I was not in church at Easter – although I was able to share in worship with others online. This year, some of us will be able to gather in our churches to celebrate Easter, and we will hold in our prayers those who would love to be with us, but who are not able to be there.

I am writing this on the day before Easter Sunday – a strange in-between day in our church year that is sometimes called ‘Easter Eve’. In the Bible there are some numbers that can have a symbolic as well as a practical meaning. For example, ‘forty’, as in the forty years that Moses and the Hebrew people wandered in the wilderness, and the forty days Jesus spent being tested in the wilderness, can also stand as a symbol for ‘a very long time’. And, as I read recently, phrases that we hear in the Easter story such as ‘after three days’ and ‘on the third day’ can also symbolise a time of waiting – waiting patiently for God to act, and to fulfil his promises.

On Easter Eve, after following the way of the cross, and bearing witness to the death and burial of Jesus, we are called to a time of waiting, in faith and hope, for God’s moment for a new world to begin. Perhaps we could see this last year, with all its hurts and sorrows, and with all its restrictions and limitations, as a long Easter Eve. We have shared this testing time of waiting, and supporting and helping one another, in faith and hope that a new day will dawn. A new day that does not have to be just a return to things as they were before, but a better day, if we will carry with us the lessons that we have learnt in these difficult times.

At Easter we can celebrate because the disciples of Jesus began to discover – on the third day – that he was risen from the dead, and that a new age had begun. As we will say when we gather together in our churches at Easter:

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Revd John Waller

God of glory,
as we celebrate the raising of your Son
fill us with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Bible readings: Isaiah 25. 6-9; Acts 10. 34-43; Mark 16. 1-8

Story: ‘A Happy Day’ the story of Easter, based on the four gospels