

Pandita Mary Ramabai
Translator of the Scriptures
23 April 1858—5 April 1922



Pandita Ramabai was born in 1858 and orphaned in the famine of 1876-7. She came from a Marathi Brahmin family and was married in 1880 to a Brahmo Samajist, Bipin Behari Das Medhavi. He died nineteen months later, leaving her widowed with a baby daughter. Ramabai lectured on Sanskrit and the position of women in India and hence the title 'Pandita' was conferred onto her. Dr W. W. Hunter admired her work and spoke of her in lectures in Edinburgh, making her known in Britain. Ramabai was considering converting to Christianity and so the Society of St John the Evangelist at Poona made arrangements for her to go to England to answer her questions about the Christian faith.

In 1883, Ramabai arrived in

Wantage to stay with the community of St Mary the Virgin. She also intended to study medicine. In September 1883, Ramabai and her daughter, Manorana, were baptised at Wantage. In 1884, Ramabai went to teach Sanskrit to women intending to become missionaries in India at Cheltenham Ladies' College, where she stayed until 1886. She then travelled to America and returned to India.

In March 1889, Ramabai opened a school in Bombay for women, and especially for widows. She received financial support from the Ramabai Association in America and from friends in England such as Dorothea Beale. In 1897, her daughter, Manorana, returned to Wantage to study medicine. Meanwhile, Ramabai moved her school to land she bought near Poona, now Pune. This place was known as Mukti Mission. Mukti was largely self-supporting with nearly 2000 people living there and with American and European helpers. Ramabai publicized the plight of the Hindu widow but also campaigned for Hindi to be the national language of India. Manorana died in 1921 and Ramabai died a year later in 1922.

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The Vicar writes...

As I sit in the study the sun is shining and the lawn mower batteries are being charged ready for the first cut of this year. The daffodils are out, the camellia buds are opening and there is a flurry of activity in the garden from the two occupied nesting boxes near to the bird feeding station. We have a family of Blue and Great Tits nesting and see plenty of visitors too: Robins, Green and Gold finches, Nuthatches and the occasional Bullfinch. It seems the natural world is springing into new life and an additional reminder for me that our Easter celebration of the new life of the Resurrection is coming soon. But, as I said previously, the true joy of Easter Day is magnified through sharing the Holy Week experience. The more we embrace the journey, the more reward we will receive, as our eyes, ears and lives become more open to the Holy Spirit.

Looking back to another sunny day, we had a tremendous Lent Appeal coffee morning which, at the time of writing, has raised close to £1000 for Schoolbags for Ukrainian school children. I would like to say a huge well done to everyone who generously supported this and to Mary and Hil for taking the lead in organising the event. The one disappointment I felt was that we had very few visitors from beyond the church family and that is something we need to think about in the future. Two days previously, we had a Mothers' Union open meeting which was also well supported and raised £200 for the branch funds. It was a joy to share some stories from my experiences climbing the 'Wainwright' hills of the Lake District.

We have also been busy with important work of the fabric of the church. Many of you will have seen the scaffolding around the North Door which I hope will be removed before Holy Week. We have had essential masonry repairs undertaken. We also have had WiFi installed in the Church and Parish Room which means we have a lot more flexibility in the way we run meetings and services in the future. I should add that this has been done in a very cost-effective way as the system is basically an extension of the Vicarage wireless network. The Parish Room has been repainted by Grahame and Mick, new curtains are coming, and after Easter we will get new chairs. The chairs have been bought through the generosity of financial gifts from two families after their loved ones from St. Cross passed away last year. There is still work to do to finish the whole project and that may involve some specific fund-raising.

It's all encouraging news and especially as we see new faces in our Church. It is important too, to warmly encourage others to get involved beyond the Sunday worship and allow people to discover and use their gifts to the glory of God.

Yours, in Christ
Paul



Some members of the 'Coffee Morning Squad'

Occasional Offices



Baptism

March 12th

Eilidh Léa Joan Marsault

Readings for Eucharistic Services		
	Morning Services	Evening Service
Sunday 2 April Palm Sunday	Isaiah 50.4-9a Philippians 2.5-11 Matthew 21.1-11	4.30pm Evening Prayer Psalm 80 Isaiah 5.1-7 Matthew 21.33-end
5 April Wednesday	Psalm 70 Hebrews 12.1-3 John 13.21-32	
6 April Maundy Thursday	Exodus 12.1-4,[5-10],11-14 1 Corinthians 11.23-26 John 13.1-17, 31b-35	
Sunday 9 April Easter Sunday	Acts 10.34-43 John 20.1-18	
12 April Wednesday	Psalm 105.1-9 Acts 3.1-10 Matthew 28.1-10	
Sunday 16 April 2nd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2.14a,22-32 John 20.19-end	
19 April Wednesday	Isaiah 43.1-7 Hebrews 5.1-4 Matthew 16.24-26	
Sunday 23 April 3rd Sunday of Easter	Acts 2.14a,36-41 Luke 24.13-35	
26 April Wednesday	Psalm 66.1-6 Acts 8.1b-8 John 6.35-40	
Sunday 30 April 4th Sunday of Easter	Acts 2.42-end John 10.1-10	