



THE FRIDAY EMAIL

Friday 12th April 2024



The Friday Thought from our Vicar - Father Simon:

I'm sure we can all look back at our lives and highlight those particular events, decisions, incidents, or fortunate moments (or 'God-cidences' as I like to call them) which have led us - for good or bad - to the place and situation in which we now find ourselves.

Sometimes, the chain of events that can affect our lives can seem so initially insignificant until we view it in retrospect. Like the small stone which, having been thrown into the pond, causes ripples to expand outwards to the water's edge, or like The Butterfly Effect which proposes that the world is so interconnected that even the flap of a butterfly's wings in one part of the globe could, hypothetically, result in a chain of events that might eventually cause a hurricane thousands of miles away, our lives are a series of consequential moments adding up to 'threescore years and ten' (Psalm 90:10), but with a final destination to be decided by us and our faith.



(Indeed, one of the arguments put forward by 'apologists' - theologians who specialise in using reason, philosophy, and logic to argue the case for the existence of God - is the 'Cosmological' or 'First Cause' argument. The idea is that everything that exists has been caused by something else, and that, when you think about it, there's nothing in our world that simply came from nothing. Therefore, going all the way back in the retrospective chain of causes, one eventually comes to the very beginning of everything when something outside of our system must have caused the universe to come into existence or else we and the universe wouldn't be here; for want of a better image: something outside our system that pressed the 'Go' button to initiate the 'Big Bang'. And apologists deduce that that 'thing' outside of our system must have been an intelligent creator, otherwise known by many of us as 'God'.)



Of course, one of those things which will have resulted in us - for good or bad - ending up in the place and situation we now find ourselves in is the words of another person. Sometimes, those words may have imposed a direction of travel upon our lives, such as the decision of a jury or the verdict of an examiner. At other times, we may have heard somebody's words and acted upon them by our own free will. That was the option presented to those who heard St Peter's words in our first reading this Sunday (see below).

As you may have already noticed, in Eastertide, as well as the Gospel reading from the New Testament, churches also hear from another part of the New Testament in their first reading, rather than from a part of the Old Testament as is so often the case for much of the rest of the year. And that other part of the New Testament is from the book of The Acts of the Apostles. Written by St Luke, it chronicles the mission of the early Church from the moment of Jesus' ascension - his return to heaven. It's a time when Jesus' apostles and disciples are not only going out to spread the good news of his Easter resurrection, but when they're still finding their feet and working out what all that Jesus told them means.



In this Sunday's first reading from Acts, we join St Peter in Jerusalem. As a result of his recent experiences following Jesus' resurrection, Peter's faith no longer sees him cowering away in a courtyard denying his Lord but, as a result of all that he's seen and heard, is so deep that it can now move mountains. And it turns out that, in the name of Jesus, Peter's able to make miracles happen.



And so we find Peter, accompanied by John, having just healed a well-known beggar who's been lame ever since he was born. Not surprisingly, those who see the result of Peter's actions are more than intrigued. They want to know in whose power Peter's acted. It results in a spontaneous 'sermon' - for want of a better

word - from Peter in which he tells the crowd all about Jesus.

I'm sure we've all found ourselves in the situation, at some stage or other, when a friend or acquaintance says to us, "Allow me to introduce you to so and so". This might, of course, be simply a polite social gesture resulting, after further niceties, in nothing more than a "It's been lovely to meet you", and our lives have carried on their own merry, sweet way. But such a moment does also have the possibility of change. Such an introduction can result in a meaningful conversation with consequences, and even sparking a life-long friendship.





In the case of those who heard Peter's words in this Sunday's first reading, many who were listening were properly introduced to Jesus for the very first time, and later in Acts we're told that "... many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand." (Acts 4:4) Now, there's cause for you; there's life-changing consequence. Peter's words seem to have been the start of a chain of events for many of his hearers which may well

have led to 'threescore years and ten' of faith and an eternal destination.

Mind you, this was no gentle softly-softly approach to mission and evangelism from Peter. As you'll notice, he doesn't mince his words! Indeed, I'm sure that, were we to try such an in-the-face technique on the streets of Sawbo, we'd not only offend a great many people, but we'd be castigated by journalists and I'd be called for a chat with a bishop!

However, as an Easter People - people who, as a consequence of Jesus' rising to new life, recognise that suffering, disappointment, and death can be transformed, through faith, into new life - we are called to introduce people to Jesus and to be witnesses to the power of his resurrection to heal and to mend lives and relationships, just as those disciples gathered together in Jerusalem in this Sunday's Gospel reading were. We may not be as bold or direct as St Peter, but our thoughts, words, and deeds do have a consequence, and we're called to be consequential in other people's lives, gently helping them to choose the right direction of travel.



It all reminds me of the prayer of King Henry VI - the founder of Eton College, and King's College in Cambridge:

*O Lord Jesus Christ,
who hast created and redeemed me,
and hast brought me unto that which now I am;
thou knowest what thou wouldst do with me;
do with me according to thy will,
for thy tender mercy's sake.
Amen.*

Yours in Christ,
Fr Simon

The Acts of the Apostles, chapter 3, verses 11b-19:

All the people ran together to Peter and John in the portico called Solomon's Portico, utterly astonished. When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, 'You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

'And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out'.

Gradual Psalm 4:

- 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness;
you set me at liberty when I was in trouble;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

Response: It is you, O Lord, who make me dwell in safety.

- 2 How long will you nobles dishonour my glory;
how long will you love vain things and seek after falsehood?
- 3 But know that the Lord has shown me his marvellous kindness;
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

Response

- 4 Stand in awe, and sin not;
commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.
- 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness
and put your trust in the Lord.

Response

- 6 There are many that say, 'Who will show us any good?'
Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon us.
- 7 You have put gladness in my heart,
more than when their corn and wine and oil increase.
- 8 In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for it is you Lord, only, who make me dwell in safety.

Response

St Luke Gospel, chapter 24, verses 36b-48:

While the disciples were talking, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things'.

➤ Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter:

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained
by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



➤ Details of Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist which is also live-streamed

- ❖ President: Fr Simon (Vicar)
- ❖ Preacher: Fr Simon (Vicar)
- ❖ Sunday Club: Charlotte Vivian
- ❖ Reader: Fay Clark
- ❖ Intercessions: Di Kitson (Lay Reader)
- ❖ Mass setting: Mass of St Thomas (music: David Thorne)
- ❖ Processional: Good Christians all, rejoice and sing! (tune: Gelobt Sei Gott)
- ❖ Gradual: A brighter dawn is breaking (tune: Nun Lasst Uns)
- ❖ Offertory: Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour (tune: St Helen)
- ❖ Communion: Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness (tune: Schmücke Dich)
- ❖ Motet: Christ the Lord is Risen Again! (music: Anthony Foster)
- ❖ Final: Love's redeeming work is done (tune: Savannah)

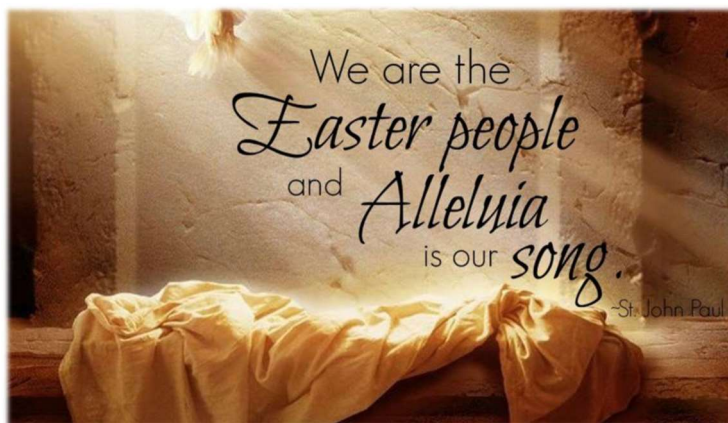


INTERCESSIONS FOR THIS WEEK

For the world-wide Church:

- ❖ Bishop Alan - Bishop of St Albans
- ❖ Bishop Jane - Bishop of Hertford
- ❖ The Venerable Janet Mackenzie - Archdeacon of Hertford
- ❖ The Revd Gaz Tracey - Area Dean
- ❖ Archbishop Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury
- ❖ In the Anglican cycle of prayer for the Anglican Church in Aoteroa, New Zealand & Polynesia
- ❖ In the Diocesan cycle of prayer for the parish and people of St Swithun, Sandy in the Biggleswade Deanery
- ❖ In our Deanery cycle of prayer for the parish and people of St James, Thorley
- ❖ For those being martyred or persecuted for their Christian faith

[\(https://releaseinternational.org/\)](https://releaseinternational.org/)



For our world:

- ❖ For the victims of Israel and Gaza during the current Israel-Palestinian conflict
- ❖ For the people of Ukraine, be they in their homeland or refugees in Europe.
- ❖ For just and peaceful governance throughout the world, not least in Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Palestine, Sudan, Somalia, China, Haiti, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Yemen, Iran, Pakistan, Myanmar, North Korea, and the DRC.
- ❖ For the victims of conflict, terrorism, and violence.
- ❖ For the victims of tragedy.
- ❖ For those suffering from the effects of climate change or natural disaster.
- ❖ For those working to reduce the effects of climate change.
- ❖ For those working to relieve suffering throughout the world.
- ❖ For emergency and keyworkers, scientists and leaders, medical and care workers, and, in this country, particularly for the NHS and social services.
- ❖ For those being unjustly held captive or being persecuted.
- ❖ For those who have been abused in body, mind, or spirit.
- ❖ For those who are victims of modern-day slavery and human trafficking.
- ❖ For those who are victims of famine or poverty, praying for the work of the *Shiksha Rath* educational project in New Delhi which we support.
- ❖ For those struggling with addiction.
- ❖ For those who are homeless, and for the work of the *Holy Trinity Night Shelter* in Bishop's Stortford which we support.
- ❖ For those involved in the migrant and refugee situation.
- ❖ For the work of organisations which are working to bring an end to poverty.



For our town:

- ❖ For the staff and patients of our Central Surgery, the Princess Alexandra, Rivers, and Herts & Essex hospitals, for our care homes, social services, voluntary care sector.
- ❖ For our Member of Parliament - Julie Marson MP
- ❖ For Sawbridgeworth Town Council, including our Mayor - Cllr Ruth Buckmaster.
- ❖ For East Herts District Council and our councillors.
- ❖ For local businesses in these uncertain times.
- ❖ For our emergency services.
- ❖ For groups and organisations, including The Hailey Centre and library.
- ❖ For our youth organisations and uniformed brigades.
- ❖ For those supporting the elderly.
- ❖ For the pupils, teachers, staff, governors, and parents associated with our local schools including our church school in Spellbrook.
- ❖ For those feeling isolated and lonely; particularly those living alone.
- ❖ For those who are concerned about making ends meet, and for organisations such as Harlow Foodbank and the evangelical church's pop-up store seeking to bring aid.



For the people of:

Sunday:	Cutforth Road & Barnard Road
Monday:	The Meadows, Waterside Place & Priors Court
Tuesday:	Vantorts Road & Alders Walk
Wednesday:	Greenstead & Vantorts Close
Thursday:	Hoestock Road & Wimborne Close
Friday:	Riverfield Lane, Millfields & April Place
Saturday:	Atherton End & Stoneleigh

For the sick, tired, and bereaved, including:

Angela Alder, June Allen, Linda Bowler, Pam Brown, John Butler, Gwenn Cooke, Robert Davis, Elsa Duce, Katrina Evangeli, Kathy Hanratty, Steven, Wendy, Doug Knights, Paul Mackin, Geoff Pavely, Pauline Phillips, Bishop Alan, Jackie White, Mark White.

For those who have died, including:

- ❖ Joseph Dainty RIP
- ❖ Mick Steward RIP
- ❖ Frank Walker RIP
- ❖ Margaret Pack RIP

For our dearly departed ones, remembered at their year's mind:

- ❖ Michael Hilton RIP (14th April)
- ❖ Jessie Child RIP (15th April)
- ❖ Helen Turner RIP (18th April)
- ❖ Michael Bowles RIP (18th April)
- ❖ Andrew Dodgshon RIP (19th April)



*God of mission,
who alone brings growth to your Church,
send your Holy Spirit
to give vision to our planning,
wisdom to our actions,
joy to our worship,
and power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
in spiritual commitment to you,
and in service to our local community,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

NOTICES

➤ **Services and events in church this week:**

(CW = Common Worship

BCP = Book of Common Prayer)

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|--|--|--|
| ❖ Fri 12 th April | 1pm | Funeral of Mr Francis Walker RIP |
| ❖ Sun 14th April
<i>Third Sunday of Easter</i> | 8am
9.30am | Said Eucharist (CW)
Parish Eucharist (CW) with Sunday Club
<i>Followed by refreshments in Church House</i> |
| ❖ Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri | 9am | Said Morning Prayer (CW) |
| ❖ Tues 16th April | 2pm | Mothers' Union meeting - Church House |
| ❖ Wed 17 th April | 9.30am
10am | Said Morning Prayer (CW)
Said Eucharist (CW) |
| ❖ Sun 21st April
<i>Fourth Sunday of Easter</i> | 8am
9.30am

3pm | Said Eucharist (CW)
Parish Eucharist (CW) with Sunday Club
<i>Followed by refreshments in Church House</i>
St George's Day parade and service |

➤ **Mothers' Union Talk - this Tuesday 16th April 2pm - Church House**



This week, the Mothers' Union is welcoming Kerry Reynolds to its gathering. Kerry is going to be informing the group about her work at the Hailey Day Centre in town. As always, all are welcome to the meeting in Church House where refreshments will be provided.



➤ **APCM & Revision of Electoral Roll - applications until Saturday 22nd April**

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting - better known as the APCM - is appearing on the horizon; do please pencil Sunday 12th May at 10.45am into your diaries. If you want to be able to vote at the APCM, you will need to be on our electoral roll which is now open for revision and new names until



Saturday 27th April. Enrolment forms are available at the back of church near the contactless payment unit. They can be handed in to our Electoral Roll Officer - Fay Clark - when you're in church, put in the blue ballot box, or handed in to the Parish Office.

➤ **Content for the Newsletter**

If you have a notice for the Friday Email, please let us know by lunchtime on Thursday.

Website: www.sawbridgeworthchurch.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com and search for 'Great St Mary's, Sawbridgeworth'
YouTube: www.youtube.com and search for 'Great St Mary's, Sawbridgeworth'

➤ **Contact us**

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01279 726629

Anthony Heard (Churchwarden)
Gilly Squire (Churchwarden)

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Jane Johnson (Parish Safeguarding Office)

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Thank you for your ongoing support of Great St Mary's