

AFFINITY

MARCH 2025
LENT, HOLY WEEK AND
EASTER EDITION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AFFINITY PARISHES OF ALL SAINTS
WITH ST SAVIOUR WESTON-SUPER MARE AND ST JOHN'S
CLEVEDON

LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER EDITION

WELCOME TO OUR LENT EDITION OF THE AFFINITY SUPPLEMENT

A very warm welcome to the second edition of our 'Affinity Supplement', a joint publication of our two Affinity parishes, All Saints with St Saviour, Weston-super-Mare and St John the Evangelist in Clevedon.

We hope that you enjoy the content, whether you are a regular worshipper, a visiting or occasional churchgoer, or a curious visitor who wishes to be informed.

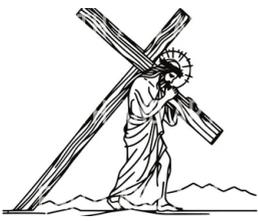
All are warmly welcome to attend our Lent and Easter worship and events.



INSIDE THIS EDITION:

NOTES ON THE LITURGICAL
SEASON- P2 - 7

CALENDER OF AFFINITY
PARISH EVENTS - P8



NOTES ON THE LITURGICAL SEASON

LENT

Lent may originally have followed Epiphany, just as Jesus' sojourn in the wilderness followed immediately on his baptism, but it soon became firmly attached to Easter, as the principal occasion for baptism and for the reconciliation of those who had been excluded from the Church's fellowship for apostasy or serious faults. This history explains the characteristic notes of Lent – self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, and preparation for Easter, to which almsgiving has traditionally been added.

*Now is the healing time decreed
for sins of heart and word and deed,
when we in humble fear record
the wrong that we have done the Lord.*

(Latin, before 12th century)

As the candidates for baptism were instructed in Christian faith, and as penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion, the whole Christian community was invited to join them in the process of study and repentance, the extension of which over forty days would remind them of the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; from the middle ages it became the custom to begin Lent by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross. The calculation of the forty days has varied considerably in Christian history. It is now usual in the West to count them continuously to the end of Holy Week (not including Sundays), so beginning Lent on the sixth Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday.

Liturgical dress is the simplest possible. Churches are kept bare of flowers and decoration. Gloria in excelsis is not used. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare or Refreshment Sunday) was allowed as a day of relief from the rigour of Lent, and the Feast of the Annunciation almost always falls in Lent; these breaks from austerity are the background to the modern observance of Mothering Sunday on the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

THE CHRISM FESTIVAL

The Chrism Festival this year is at the Church of the Holy Nativity in Knowle, Bristol, on Saturday 12th April beginning with Mass at 11am and ending with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at 3pm. In between there is a 'hearty lunch' and Catechesis. The Mass is concelebrated by the Bishop and his priests. When Peter acknowledged Jesus as 'the Christ' (Mark 8.29), he was recognizing him as the 'Anointed One' of God: Christos in Greek, Messiah in Hebrew. The title that had once belonged to the anointed kings of Israel is now conferred on Jesus, who was anointed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at his baptism in the river Jordan (cf Acts 10.38). As Jesus received baptism at John's hands, his true identity was revealed:

*Manifest at Jordan's stream,
prophet, priest and king supreme.
(Christopher Wordsworth)*



Our own baptism is the sacramental sign of our union with Christ, and of God's gift to us of his Holy Spirit, to make us God's children by adoption and grace, and to equip us for the share that all Christians have in Christ's own ministry. The New Testament speaks of this gift of the Holy Spirit as an anointing (1 John 2.20-27; 2 Corinthians 1.21-22).

From an early date, it became customary to trace the sign of the cross in oil on the heads of candidates for baptism, and to anoint them again after baptism with the perfumed oil of chrism – a sign of incorporation into the prophetic, priestly and royal life of Jesus Christ. At the same time, the Letter of James urges its recipients to anoint the sick with oil (James 5.15), as a sign of the healing and forgiveness that are also given through the Holy Spirit (cf Mark 6.13). These are the biblical roots of the ancient custom of using oils in the life of the Church, and of the three particular oils – of catechumens, of the sick, and of chrism – that are prepared in the Chrism Eucharist. In the course of Christian history, they have come to be used in many ways – especially, as in the Old Testament, for the setting apart of people and things for a special place in the life of the Church, for bishops and priests at their ordination, for kings and queens at their crowning, and for churches and altars at their consecration. There is a more recent custom, introduced first into the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Paul VI in the middle of the twentieth century, that the Chrism Eucharist is also an occasion for the renewal of commitment to ministry.



As the priests gathered around their bishop to receive the oils to take back to their parishes, he suggested that they should renew their commitment to serve Christ. This is appropriate on this day, when we remember that Christ consecrated himself to his Father's service and expressed his obedient self-gift in the institution of the Eucharist and in the agony of Gethsemane, and prayed for the unity of his disciples.

HOLY WEEK

As Holy Week approaches, the atmosphere of the season darkens; the readings begin to anticipate the story of Christ's suffering and death, and the reading of the Passion Narrative gave to the Fifth Sunday its name of Passion Sunday. There are many devotional exercises which may be used in Lent and Holy Week outside the set liturgy. The Stations of the Cross, made popular in the West by the Franciscans after they were granted custody of the Christian sites in the Holy Land, are the best known.



It is still uncertain when Christians first began to make an annual (as opposed to a weekly) memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. This Pascha (a word derived indirectly from pesach, Hebrew 'Passover') was at first a night-long vigil, followed by the celebration of the Eucharist at cock-crow, and all the great themes of redemption were included within it: incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, glorification. Over time, the Pascha developed into the articulated structure of Holy Week and Easter. Through participation in the whole sequence of services, the Christian shares in Christ's own journey, from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the empty tomb on Easter morning. The procession with palms, which was already observed in Jerusalem in the fourth century, is accompanied by the reading or singing of the Passion Narrative, in which the whole story of the week is anticipated.

EASTER

According to ancient custom there is no celebration of the Eucharist on Easter Eve. The orders of Morning and Evening Prayer offer adequate liturgical provision for the day. It is particularly important that Evening Prayer should be treated, by the style of its celebration, as belonging to the Eve, and not as the first service of Easter, anticipating the Easter Liturgy itself. From earliest times Christians have gathered through the night of Easter to recall the story of God's saving work, from creation through to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, the Easter Liturgy is not merely a presentation of God's work. It is meant to be a real experience of new life for the worshipper, a passing from darkness to light which offers hope to all the faithful. It is therefore important that the preparation is prayerful and thorough.

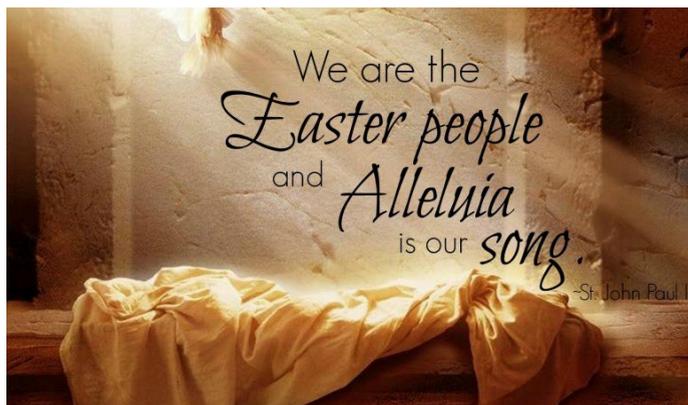
He is Risen!



The Easter Vigil marks the end of the emptiness of Holy Saturday, and leads into the celebration of Christ's resurrection. The singing of the Exsultet, the ancient hymn of triumph and rejoicing, links this night of our Christian redemption to the Passover night of Israel's redemption out of Egypt. Christian baptism is a participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, a dying to sin in order to be reborn in him, and the Easter Vigil was from early Christian times a preferred occasion for baptism. It is fittingly a time when those who are already Christians may repeat with renewed commitment the promises of their own baptism,

and strengthen their sense of incorporation into the royal and priestly ministry of the whole people of God. The Easter Gospel is proclaimed with all the joy and splendour that the church can find. The Easter Eucharist may follow immediately on the Vigil, or be deferred until Easter Day. All the resources of the church – music, flowers, bells, colours – are used to celebrate Christ’s resurrection. The ‘Alleluia’, which has been silent throughout Lent, returns.

*Now the queen of seasons, bright
with the day of splendour,
with the royal feast of feasts,
comes its joy to render.
(John of Damascus)*



THE AFFINITY PARISHES OF ALL SAINTS WITH ST SAVIOUR AND ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST WISH YOU A BLESSED AND HOLY EASTER

THIS SUPPLEMENT IS PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR FOR THE CHURCH SEASONS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS, LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER, EASTER TO PENTECOST AND PENTECOST TO ALL SAINTS

CHURCH CALENDAR

All Saints with St Saviour

13 April – Palm Sunday

10.30am Procession of Palms,
Passion and Parish Mass

14 April – Holy Monday 10am
Mass

15 April – Holy Tuesday

10am Mass

16 April – Holy Wednesday

10am Mass / 10.45am Coffee
Church

17 April - Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Evening Mass, Last
Supper and Watch of the Sacred
Passion

18 April – Good Friday

11am Stations of the Cross
2pm Liturgy of the Lord's Death

19 April – Holy Saturday

8pm Liturgy of the Resurrection

20 April – Easter Day

10.30am Solemn Mass of Easter

St John the Evangelist

13 April – Palm Sunday

10.30am Procession of Palms,
Passion and Parish Mass

5.30pm Evening Prayer
& Benediction

14 April – Holy Monday

6pm Mass

16 April – Holy Wednesday

6pm Mass

17 April - Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Evening Mass, Last
Supper and Watch of the Sacred
Passion

18 April – Good Friday

10am Stations of the Cross
2pm Liturgy of the Lord's Death

19 April – Holy Saturday

8pm Liturgy of the Resurrection

20 April – Easter Day

10.30am Solemn Mass of Easter
5.30pm Evening Prayer
& Benediction

THIS LIST DOES NOT INCLUDE THE DAILY MASSES, MORNING AND
EVENING PRAYER, AND OTHER DEVOTIONS WHICH CAN BE
REFERENCED ON THE WEEKLY PEW SHEET.