

A REFLECTION FOR EASTER DAY 2020

Dear Friends of Christ Church West Wimbledon:

OUR CHURCHES ARE BARRED AND LOCKED THIS EASTER. But.....

It will not surprise many of you, I suspect, when I tell you that lots of clergy are getting very hot under the (dog) collar about the closure of our churches and the command from the Archbishops that not even the clergy can go into them for private prayer. Of course, I too am sad about this – but I also do understand the need for everyone at this time of emergency to stay at home and avoid unnecessary journeys – and this has to include the clergy who must always set a good example.

But whatever the arguments that are swirling around, it goes without saying that Easter 2020 will be very different for us all. I hope that you will be able to be in touch with family and friends. I hope that you will be able to worship at home – maybe accessing some worship which is live streaming via the internet or listening to a service on the radio or watching a service on television. Maybe something we can all do at home is to light a candle as a symbol of the Easter Candle which we would be lighting early in the dawn of Easter Day and which would burn at every Easter Service. Be assured – our Easter Candle will be blessed and lit when once again we are able to worship in our beloved building together. But in the meantime, do remember that those first Christians didn't go into the Temple or the synagogue to worship and pray together. For them:

Passion and Resurrection were in an upper room, a priest's house, a place outside Bethany, a garden, a guard room, a barracks, outside a city wall, on the roadside, a couple's home in Emmaus. A beach. A boat. Never assume we can't do Easter unless we are in a church building – but nonetheless here is a beautiful reminder of Easter 2019 at Christ Church:



Some words from Sr Edith Stein, Carmelite Nun, imprisoned in Westerbrook transit camp, August 1942: *“We are very calm and cheerful. Of course, so far there has been no Communion; maybe that will come later. Now we have a chance to experience a little how to live purely from within”.*

A Meditation on the closing of churches by Gilo, co-editor of Letters to a Broken Church

Churches may be glad of the stillness. These great stone ships seldom have the chance to hunker down into replenishing silence. Christianity is too talkative. Noisy religion. The Society for Standing Up and Sitting Down Again. The Society for Annunciation of a Momentary Silence

You see your empty church and see shipwreck. And think that because you are not there in linen robes with rehearsals of creeds, that prayer is not there.

*But your churches and temples are not empty. Silence is there. Praying in her many houses. Clergy nor creed nor any religion own Her. Stillness beyond all religion, yet deeply at its core,
Even while you fill temples with the clatter of words.*

Do not fret about your empty church. Silence holds the space holy – and always did. She holds all things and mourns all things. She is in all things. She holds every story but her own.

She knows each name, with no need to know her own.

Let Silence guard the stillness and the stones.

And when the great keys are turned, the wooden doors re-open, tread gently.

Do not rush to fill the stillness. The great stone ships held their prayer for you.

Honour them with silence of your own.

With my prayers and best wishes for a very Happy Easter to you all, Michael

Alleluia, Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed, Alleluia.

