

Anglican Diocese
of Cyprus
and the Gulf

[www.cypgulf.org/
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Opportunities

**A Cloud
of Witnesses
St Augustine's
College of Theology**
An on-line retreat from
18 April to 16 May (5
sessions) learning from
faith journeys within the
Jewish tradition.
Click [here](#) for details.



**23 April 2021
Wells
in the Wilderness
Women's Retreat**
This will be recorded so
if the date doesn't suit,
it is possible to register
and use the material
later. For more details
click [here](#).



**Encountering Jesus
11 May 2021**
Bishop Rachel Treweek
in conversation with Dr
Paula Gooder on
encountering the life-
giving presence of Jesus
today.
Click [here](#) for details.



**Mother Teresa's
experience of the
absence of God**
Listen to a 3 min video
by Bishop Robert
Barron by clicking [here](#).

Easter Absence and Presence

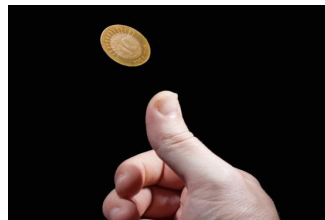
We are now into a second pandemic Easter period, the 50 day period from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. This period is usually one of hope but today many still teeter on the edge of it. May be this feeling connects us more with the first Easter when things were far from certain?

When we count the recorded number of resurrection appearances before Pentecost, they are very few. When they happened they were quite intimate but brief. When each encounter was over, I wonder how the disciples were left feeling, and what they then thought about his disappearance ... again?

There was proof of Jesus being present with the disciples as they used their senses to realise this. They touched him, they ate with him, they heard his unique voice, they witnessed a miracle, but then he was gone ... again.

Jesus had the tendency to make his presence known for as long as it was needed, and then he seemed to make himself absent ... again.

This is no different to our experience today. God seems to come and go. We get glimpses of God, our hope is increased, then the experience fades.



It is a mystery we have to live with, the seeming absence and known presence of God. But I wonder which we learn the most from - feeling close or distant from God?

Often when people are on retreat they may only have fleeting Easter-type glimpses of God, but that is enough to encourage them, to give hope when it seems God has disappeared.

May be we can take some encouragement from Rev Barbara Brown Taylor:

*“silence is as much a sign
of God's presence
as of God's absence –
that divine silence is not a
vacuum to be filled
but a mystery
to be entered into”.*

God knows absence can make the heart grow stronger ... again!

An Exercise

Take a Coin

- Look at both sides, notice their differences/similarities.
- Imagine one side represents the absence of God and the other the presence of God.
- Flip the coin. On which side does it land?
- How does this side of the coin connect with your awareness of God over your life?
- Flip the coin again.
- How does this side of the coin represent your Easter experience of God?

Engaging the Silence

first, there is
prayer
and where there is prayer
there may be
miracles
but where miracles
may not be, there are
questions
and where
there are questions
there may be
silence
but silence may be
more than
absence
silence may be presence
muted
silence
may not be nothing but
something
to explore, defy, accuse
engage
and this is
prayer
and where there is prayer
there may yet be
miracles
(Pete Grieg)