

Services for Holy Week and Easter at St Helena's
Please feel welcome to join us whether for the first time, as a visitor or pilgrim, or as a regular congregation member

Palm Sunday (April 17)

9.30 Holy Eucharist .There will be blessing and distribution of palms at this service

Maundy Thursday (April 21)

6.30 pm Eucharist This is the day we recall the Last Supper

Good Friday (April 22)

12 -3 A Service for Good Friday. The service will include hymns, prayers, readings, addresses and material for reflection, and will be organised in (roughly) half hour sections to allow people to come and go as they wish and are able.

Easter Day (April24)

9.30 Holy Eucharist

The Bible Study Group will meet during Holy Week on Wednesday 20th at 3 in the Upper Room. There will also be a Council Meeting this week on Monday 18th at 7pm.



St Helena's Anglican Church Larnaca

Pastoral letter Easter 2011

Dear Friends,

The Passion of Christ is still a subject that excites film makers and TV programme makers alike. It still surprises me that in this secular age, there are enough people who want to attempt new dramatic interpretations of the events of Holy Week and Easter, and that there is a ready audience for them. That can only be good, but we do have to approach each of them with a little caution. I never saw Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, being put off, like many others, by the reports of prolonged gratuitous violence that it contained. There is a Hollywood way of portraying evil.

One of the issues that raises for me is that it can lead us to think that evil always reveals itself in spectacular ways. In fact the most insidious evils are the ones that become accepted in our everyday lives. The stories of how whole populations in places like war-time Germany, or more recently Serbia or Rwanda can come to accept evil as acceptable is a story about ordinary people doing ordinary things, and simply losing sight of their moral compass.

Actually there is also a Hollywood way of portraying the resurrection, and it is worth remembering that that too can lead us to think that resurrection is always spectacular - a special effects kind of thing. In fact that too can be, indeed needs to be, seen within our everyday and ordinary lives where reconciliation happens, where good triumphs over evil and where new life is made possible through sacrifice and care.

The Bible accounts of the Passion and Resurrection are in fact very different from each other. The Passion accounts are easily recognisable from our own news programmes. It's an action story, of political intrigue, of the corruptions of power and clashes of cultures. The Resurrection accounts are very different. They all differ from each other and they have a more poetic or symbolic character as the authors strive to put into words experiences that are hard to describe.

These are not descriptions of actions so much as ways of trying to interpret changes in the lives of the characters.

That points us to a problem of which we are all aware. There isn't enough good news on our TVs and in our newspapers. One of the reasons for that is that bad news concerns actions and is reportable easily and with pictures. Good news is often about processes - healing, loving, nurturing, negotiating, building. These take a long time, are much less immediate and are difficult to picture. As Christians, at Easter we are made aware anew of our need to have the patience to await that kind of good news, life changing resurrection, and not simply to settle for a Hollywood version.

At the other end of the scale, I never cease to be amazed by the attempts to trivialise Easter in secular life. When I was looking for a cover for this letter, I typed in "Easter" to a well known search engine and found something like two million pictures of bunnies. I notice that even in Cyprus where I expect the general population to take Easter seriously, the civic decorations of roundabouts consist mainly of eggs and rabbits.

Easter is a serious time but it is also a hugely joyous time, and a time to remember and celebrate all that is good and worthwhile about life and belief. Eggs and rabbits no doubt play their part in that, but our job as a church is to hold that vision of the worthwhile-ness of life, and to present it to people who need hope, who need healing and who need to see new purpose for themselves. That is how good news really begins, and it is something that we can all be part of.

Sue joins me in wishing you all a Happy Easter.

John Holdsworth Chaplain