



there must be
more to **life...**



*Discover
Jesus.*

Greetings,

Christ is Risen. Alleluia!

May's *Discover Jesus* material comes to you as we are in the midst of the queen of seasons – the season of Easter. Hopefully the season continues to be one full of joy as we head toward its conclusion with the Feast of Pentecost. In the meantime, my hope is that you continue using the Easter greeting and response in your worship, as well as continue to use the *Alleluia, alleluia* as part of the dismissal, and other seasonal material so as to keep the Easter tone present.

In May, our theme is ***Jesus calls us to be love*** – picking up on the post-Resurrection dialogues in our Gospels; and also leading into the implications of Pentecost and the gift of Jesus' ongoing presence in our lives and the life of the Christian community – also modeling and the life of the Trinity – the community of love into which we model are drawn as church and people.

For many, the word *love* is seen to do with romance and emotions. As we read the Gospels, we discover that the love spoken of there is an action, which calls us to even do the loving thing toward the unlovely or enemy! How then do we “be Jesus” in heart, mind and body – in our actions toward others? It is not our loving actions toward those we know and who are “like us” Jesus challenges us over, but the “outsider!”

In May, we have the following occasions and opportunities to use as points of interaction with our surrounding communities:

Rogation Sunday (Easter 5) – 6th May. In the northern hemisphere, Rogation Sunday and Rogation-tide are occasions to bless the fields in anticipation of Spring. Often done in procession, with litany sung, and God asked (rogare – to ask) to bless the earth and its fruits, as well as the labour of those who till the soil. Obviously we are “upside down” in terms of Spring, etc., but Rogation can still provide an opportunity for Harvest Thanksgiving. For thanking God for the fruits of the earth and work of human hands!

One way this can be done, apart from the traditional agricultural gifts of vegetables, wheat, etc., is to ask local shop owners, businesses and industries to loan something from their business which is representative of their shop. Let them know that the Thanksgiving is Harvest and Community – that the service of worship, whether Eucharist or a Liturgy of the Word, will be giving thanks for them and their business. This also enables more urban areas to reflect upon God's graciousness in a wider

sense! Those in rural communities might even be able to hold a service of worship in a farmer's field and bless the land?

And what to do with the produce? See if there is a local charity – Anglicare, ac.care – who might be able to use some of the produce, especially if dry or tinned goods, personal hygiene items, etc. More perishables might be “sold” to members of the congregation and the funds donated to a set charity?

Some Rogation/Harvest Thanksgiving material is attached with this letter, and you can also find further materials to assist with worship here:

www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons/agricultural-year

www.holyfaith.org.uk/index.php/short-talks/seasons-rogationtide

www.letallcreationpraise.org/worship-services/rogation-blessing

www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/worshipandmusic/sermon-archive/rogation-and-transformation

www.redeemer-kenmore.org/2017/05/16/procession-rogation-sunday-2/

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 13th -20th May, 2018, in the week between Ascension and Pentecost.

This year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity focuses on the text “Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power” (cf. Exodus 15:6) and materials have been prepared by churches of the West Indies. Some excellent resources for printing and sharing are provided via the link below, or contact the Registry Office:

<http://www.ncca.org.au/faith-and-unity-resources>

Archbishop of Canterbury – Thy Kingdom Come – This is a Church of England initiative, which tends to coincide with our southern hemisphere Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (in England this is often between the feasts of St. Peter's Confession (18th Jan) and the Conversion of St. Paul (25th Jan)). This is a commitment to pray for family and friends; that they will come to faith in Jesus.

Information about this year's launch can be found here:

www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/latest-news/archbishops-launch-thy-kingdom-come-2018

www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/priorities/evangelism-and-witness/thy-kingdom-come

This is the Thy Kingdom Come website with resources, links to videos, etc. www.thykingdomcome.global

Pentecost Sunday – 20th May – A song has been attached with this letter as a possible suggestion for use on the day. Common Worship has some excellent material for the observance of Pentecost Sunday, particularly the Dismissal rite, which has a definite missional focus, impelling us “outwards.”

The link is here: www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons/easter#mmm240

Another idea in association with this day is to use different languages during the service – whether for prayers, songs, or particularly some or all of the readings. Do you have members in your congregation who are bi- or multi-lingual? This would be a great opportunity to invite them to participate using their mother tongue. There might be other activities you could have to invite and involve those of other ethnicities in your community?

Trinity Sunday – 27th May – Too often we treat this day shabbily, confusing God’s internal community of love as some sort of arithmetical puzzle to avoid! God as a community/family of love and self-giving – what are the ways we live this out as a community of faith – and, what are the ways our community of faith contradicts this?

Extra liturgical material for this day can be found here: www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/times-and-seasons/trinity-all-saints#mmm241

Corpus Christi – Thanksgiving for the Holy Communion – 31st May

This is traditionally the Thursday following Trinity Sunday. Some communities transfer the feast to the following Sunday, or use some material on the following Sunday. While rare in Australia, some church communities will even have a public procession with the Blessed Sacrament carried through the streets, with music, etc. While often deemed a rather “Roman” Catholic commemoration by some, it does figure in most modern Anglican prayer books, and is an occasion for reflection on the gift of Jesus present in our midst in the Holy Eucharist.

Some extra liturgical material is found here:

www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/churchs-year/festivals/day-thanksgiving-institution-holy-communion-corporis-christi

While I am sure most have their own reading regime, an interesting book to recommend is *Bearing False Witness: Debunking Centuries of Anti-Catholic History*. The writer, Rodney Stark, is an American sociologist of religion. One of his earliest works was *The Rise of Christianity*, seeking to understand how a small group of Jesus’ followers grew into what we know as the Christian church. How did it spread and pass on its message? A lot of his writing seeks to be apologetic, in terms of the myths associated with Christianity – e.g. Christianity is bad because of ... the Crusades; is anti-science; is anti-Jewish; burnt witches, etc., etc. Since the time of the Enlightenment, Christianity has been viewed with suspicion by many, and we are inheritors of that in our society today. His recent book, *Bearing False Witness* is a convenient and snappy presentation dealing with many of these anti-Christian (anti-Catholic!) popular myths. I can wholeheartedly recommend purchasing a copy.

With best wishes as Easter continues,

DP

Fr David Patterson
(Chair of Diocesan Task Group)