

A few words from the Vicarage ...



The first of April finds us in the middle of Holy Week and our preparations for the Maundy Thursday vigil, leading into the darkness of Good Friday. These are, potentially, the most challenging and certainly, the most emotional and solemn days within our church calendar. Yet we can't avoid making this journey if we are to come even close to appreciating the majesty and wonder of Easter and the glorious miracle of Christ's resurrection.

This year it will be my privilege to lead our local Churches Together Good Friday act of worship outside St Paul's Charity Shop - which will provide a most fitting backdrop, as it is a real and tangible centre for our parish's mission and outreach at the very heart of the Ansdell and Fairhaven community. I hope that we will be able to share the Gospel message, not only with our brothers and sisters from our covenanted church families, but with all who may pass by and engage in what we are about - which is to praise God and proclaim his name. Whatever the weather, it is also hoped that we may be assured of a large and enthusiastic gathering before wending our way in a procession of witness to the White Church for our Ecumenical service.

Looking further into April, on the 12th ('Low Sunday'), we hold our Annual Parochial Church Meeting - perhaps the most important meeting of the year for the members of St Paul's parish. Details of the church finances will have been made available for all to see and consider; our various reports and statistics will also have been provided as we review our work - our successes and failures - in readiness for another year.

I urge all to participate fully in the business of the church in this way - if we are to achieve the aims of our Mission Action Plan, we need the people and the resources to do so. This is the time when we lay down the plans to fulfil our objects and we need **YOU** to be involved and to play your part. Churchwardens and PCC members will be elected, sidesmen and women will be appointed - but will **YOUR** name feature anywhere within these roles?

The work of the parish relies heavily upon those who commit their time, skills and energy willingly - but can we rely upon **YOU** to share this burden? If you haven't considered already taking a more active part, perhaps now is the time to do so. We should be looking more towards renewal than survival - the former is

the more positive outlook and is about mission whilst the latter suggests pessimism and damage limitation.

This should cause the Easter clarion to ring out loudly in everyone's ears - as we carry our cross beyond Calvary and on to victory over death through resurrection - for therein lies the Christian hope and the future for our church.

Have a truly Holy Week and a blessed Easter,
your Vicar,

Fr D.