



PARISH OF SAINT FELIX, FELIXSTOWE

Parish Priest : Fr. John Barnes MA VF
The Presbytery, 8, Gainsborough Road, Felixstowe, IP11 7HT
Tel.01394 282561 e-mail frjohnfelixstowe@gmail.com

Parish Website: stfelixfelixstowe.uk Helping Hands - 07342722521

April 12th, 2020 : EASTER SUNDAY

Fr. John writes :

Dear Parishioners,

However inappropriate it may sound, I must first wish you all a joyful Easter. I do so because however dark and depressing things may seem at present, we Christians still have something wonderful to celebrate, namely the fact of the Resurrection of the Lord. This is something greater than any pandemic. This is something to make us joyful however miserable our condition may be, or however anxious and afraid we are. The coronavirus is not something of eternal consequence. The Resurrection of the Lord is.

The Resurrection, which we celebrate today and in the fifty days which lie ahead, has implications for us all. Christ has risen, and is alive for ever. And if we are joined to him sacramentally by Baptism and by Holy Communion, then we have his life hidden within us, and we too will rise to new and endless life. We have his word for it. All of us, like Jesus, are going to die. And if its not of the coronavirus in the near future, it will be of something else later on. But all of us who are 'in Christ', joined to him, made one with him, are going to inherit eternal life. For us that is as certain as is the fact of our dying, and much more wonderful.

I don't wish you a HAPPY Easter. Maybe with all the restrictions, with not being at Mass 'live', and with not seeing loved ones and going where we wish, this Easter won't be especially happy. No, I wish you a JOYFUL Easter, and joy is something much deeper than mere happiness. Happiness can be superficial, and is certainly

fragile. Whereas Joy is present at a deeper level : it has deeper foundations, and indeed is a gift from God. The foundation of our Easter joy is the fact that the Resurrection has taken place, and that new and endless life is now available to us because of the Resurrection. Quite simply, because he is risen, Jesus has got this new life to share with us. And because he loves us dearly, he wants to do so. Which means that when we celebrate His resurrection, we are in a sense celebrating our own future resurrection too. I hope that in the darkness of the present time, the light and the joy of the Resurrection will be yours.

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A parishioner said to me yesterday that she felt that the current crisis will bring us all closer to God and closer to one another. I think she was right. Closer to one another - yes, there is a wonderful spirit of co-operation and of care for the vulnerable and needy around. People are really putting themselves out to show love and care for their neighbour. People are certainly being drawn closer to one another. And closer to God : yes, I suspect that many are thinking more deeply than at other times, and one hopes that they will indeed come to discover God, and come to know him better. I think often crises in the life of the individual or of the community lead people to God. Not the least of the various silver linings. I've been very impressed by the large number of you who are watching Masses on television or on the internet. Certainly many of these are available. If you tune in to the Diocesan website, there is a great selection there. (The Bishop asks that your attention is drawn to the Mass celebrated by the Cardinal which will be on the radio at 8.0am on Easter morning.)

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It will be awful, though, not being physically in church at Easter. Last week I wrote to the bishop saying how wrong I thought it was that our churches are closed when supermarkets and newsagents are open. Couldn't the ruling be re-considered? He very kindly 'phoned back, and said that whilst he too hates the churches being closed, the real problem is sanitization. Supermarkets and newsagents, he said, have the resources to sanitize their premises each day, which we do not ; there are just so many surfaces in a church which an infected person may have touched.....

Something that we can do at home whilst the churches are closed, though, is to create a 'holy corner' as a focus for our prayer : a Crucifix or picture, candles, maybe flowers from our garden. I've seen such 'holy corners' - little shrines in effect- in the homes of some of our Indian parishioners, and have always been impressed by them. When I've been on holiday, staying in a cottage where obviously I've not had the church to go into for my prayers as I can here, I've always chosen a chair in some corner or other to be my 'prayer chair' - reserved for that, where I can sit to say my Offices. You could have a 'prayer chair', maybe combined with a 'holy corner' in your house, and I think you might find it helpful in maintaining your spiritual life during these difficult times.

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It's wonderful how the sun has shone brightly during these recent difficult days. Not as if mocking us in our confinement and anxiety, but rather assuring us of the warmth of God's love, and of hope for the future. In the dying and rising of the Lord that same love of God for us blazes forth, brighter than the sun itself. The risen Lord is our rock, our companion, the one in whom we place our trust. May he bless you and keep you in this Easter season, and always.

Your friend and parish priest,

Fr. John

PARISH NOTICEBOARD

Anniversaries this week Kathleen Newman

(2008), Brian Hughes (2006), Edith Martin (2008), David Holding (2009), Margaret Smyth (2010), Ida Shaw (2012), Gwendoline Jones (2018), Phyllis Miller (2001), Bruce Fisk (2013), and Kevin Hendley (2015). May they Rest in Peace

Easter Offering As you know, the collections on Christmas Day and Easter Day go to the parish priest, not as a gift or tip, but as a basic part of his annual income - it's part of the way by which priests are paid in the Catholic Church. The Diocesan Finance Office has sent out the following message : 'It has been agreed that the Easter offering should be taken this year on a Sunday designated for this purpose by the diocese once the present pandemic is over. Any donations made online over this coming weekend will also count towards the Easter Offering.'

Foodbank There is a great need for foodstuffs and other necessities at the present time. The items which we would normally leave in the box at the back of church should for the present be taken to the Salvation Army depot in Cobbold Road.

Waiting for you I duly blessed the palms on Palm Sunday - by direction of the Bishop - and these are being kept for you until we can be back together in church. Likewise, children, the chocolate Easter Eggs have been purchased, and will be blessed and distributed at Mass once the normal Sunday Masses recommence.

Canon Michael Hazell RIP We were saddened by the recent death of Canon Hazell, who had long-standing links with Felixstowe, and who from time to time had assisted, during his retirement at Kesgrave, with services at the Convent and at St.Felix. He was a good and holy man, great loved by all who knew him. His private funeral will be at Woodbridge on April 15th, and a memorial Mass will be held for him when things return to normal.

The Daily Mass One or two people have told me that they think about the Mass taking place day by day at St.Felix, and join themselves to it spiritually. This is good, and I think it might be easier for people to do this if I said the Mass not at 7.30am, as I've been doing, but at our familiar time of 9.30am in future.