



AD CLERUM

Passiontide 2023

Dear Colleagues,

‘Nails were not enough to hold God-and-man nailed and fastened to the cross, had not love held him there.’ The words of St Catherine of Siena (1347-80) speak of the amazing, transforming love of God that we encounter in Christ crucified. Walking the way of the cross, we rediscover our primary calling to be more Christ-centred for the sake of God’s world and walking the Emmaus Road, we rediscover our vocation to be bearers of God’s hope and joy.

Coronation

On Easter Day we begin the gradual build-up to the anointing and crowning of King Charles III in Westminster Abbey on 6th May. To mark the event, the Church of England has published a beautiful prayer book for each of the 28 days that run from Easter Sunday to Coronation Day. Each day has a theme and short reflection explaining the Christian symbolism of the Coronation Service to help guide our prayer for the King and nation. Free copies are being distributed across the deaneries, but they cost only £1.50. So if people miss out on a free copy, further copies can easily be purchased or ordered in bulk via this website: [Church House Publishing website](#). Do encourage people to look out for them.

The Coronation will be a time to reflect on our story as a nation and to look forward in hope. The Coronation weekend also presents a unique missional opportunity to reach out in friendship and service to people in our local community through hosting services of celebration, organising street parties and community events, and volunteering. You will find all the information you need on the Church of England website. It has a wealth of ideas, liturgical resources and prayers, plus a suite of branded publicity tools to help you promote your services and events. Just follow the link: <https://www.churchofengland.org/coronation>

- The Coronation ceremony on Saturday 6th May will be the centrepiece of the weekend. You might like to consider live-streaming the service if you have a big screen in your church. The BBC is permitting organisations to show the event without a licence which is fantastic news.
- Please think about holding a **Service of Celebration** on Sunday 7th May and invite everyone from your local community including councillors, uniformed organisations and local schools. Why not serve celebration drinks after the service? Let’s build on the themes of community, faith and service that lie at the heart of the Coronation liturgy. It’s an ideal occasion to share a message about our faith and to show the church as a dynamic presence at the heart of our county.

- Why not host or join in with a [Big Community Lunch](#) on the Sunday?
- Bank Holiday Monday 8th May is designated as the [Big Help Out](#). It is a chance to serve the people of Devon with joy by volunteering our time along with others in our neighbourhood.
- Why not plant cornflower seeds in your churchyard? The King wore a cornflower in his buttonhole at the baptisms of his grandchildren. It is one of his favourite flowers. Seeds planted in May will be in flower in September for the first anniversary of the death of Queen Elizabeth.

If you are putting on a service or organising an event during the Coronation weekend, please list them on <https://www.achurchnearyou.com>. Don't assume that everyone in your area will automatically know what's happening.

Farewell to Nick Shutt

Nick Shutt has been a superb Archdeacon of Plymouth and will be a hard act to follow. He has won the respect, affection and admiration of the whole diocese, not simply those in his archdeaconry. In retirement he and Corinne are going to continue to live in Walkhampton; so we shall not lose sight of him or his distinctive brand of wisdom. He will be preaching his valedictory sermon during Evensong in the Cathedral on Tuesday 25th April at 5.30pm, after which there will be an opportunity to bid him farewell. All are welcome.

Living in Love and Faith

There are contrasting and competing voices in the Diocese about the decisions made by the General Synod in February and the suite of liturgical resources known as 'Prayers of Love and Faith'. They go too far for some people and not nearly far enough for others. Whatever decisions individual clergy take and whatever our personal convictions as bishops, Bishop Jackie, Bishop James and I are committed to serving all the churches and all clergy of this Diocese, respecting and supporting both those who want to use these resources in their church community and those who do not. No clergyperson will be disadvantaged or discriminated against for following their conscience.

Going forward, many of those involved in the LLF process have found the opportunity for well-structured discussion groups helpful in understanding different perspectives. In the next few weeks, we are planning to publish a discussion group template based on the LLF discussion groups held at General Synod. This is something you might find helpful to use in your church, mission community or deanery. If you would find it helpful, we will also endeavour to provide an outside facilitator for the group. The template will be published on our Diocesan LLF web page and shared in 'Roots & Shoots' in due course.

'Come and See' with the Archbishop of Canterbury

Over the Remembrance Weekend of 10th–12th November we are hosting a weekend of mission supported by Archbishop Justin under the banner 'Come and See'. He will be taking part in a number of themed events across the county, and we would like to encourage churches across the Diocese to hold their own mission outreach event over that weekend. Events do need to be aimed at people who do not normally come to church to give them an opportunity to 'come and see' something of the hope we have in Jesus Christ. As always, following up contacts after the weekend need to be part of the planning process. You can apply to have

an evangelist from the Archbishops' College of Evangelists to come along to your event and work with you beforehand to plan it. Thanks to a generous grant, we can offer funding of up to £100 per mission community towards the costs of an event during the weekend.

Here is the website link to find out more and share your 'Come and See' weekend plan with us: <https://exeter.anglican.org/christian-faith/come-and-see-mission-weekend-2023/>. Sharing our faith doesn't have to be complicated. It's as simple as saying 'come and see' and letting God do the rest.

A poem for Holy Week

Hope is born when we see the world through the lens of Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord, as this poem by Ralph Wright OSB declares:

Messiah

Anoint the wounds
of my spirit
with the balm
of forgiveness
pour the oil
of your calm
on the waters
of my heart

take the squeal
of frustration
from the wheels
of my passion
that the power
of your tenderness
may smooth
the way I love

that the tedium
of giving
in the risk
of surrender
and the reaching
out naked
to a world
that must wound

may be kindled
fresh daily
to a blaze
of compassion
that the grain
may fall gladly
to burst in the ground
- and the harvest abound

I and my colleagues on the senior staff look forward to seeing you in the Cathedral on Maundy Thursday for the annual service of the Blessing of Oils and the Renewal of Ministerial Promises. May our crucified and risen Lord renew us all with his grace and 'the harvest abound'.

With my thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

+ Robert Exon