

Saint Mary's Newsletter: April

Vicar: David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 07 8243850

Vicars Warden: John Heaton 07 8243996



DUE TO COVID-19 ALL SERVICES ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE - on the right are suggestions on how you can celebrate the special holy days from your home in April

Psalm 91:1-7

*¹Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty*

*²I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."*

*³Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.*

*⁴He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*

*⁵You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,*

*⁶nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.*

*⁷A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.*

Saturday 25th:

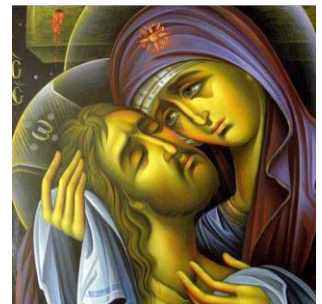
10am ANZAC Service @ Gordonton Hall -
Cancelled



Sun 5th Palm Sunday: From your home, remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, and how people waived palm fronds in celebration of the Messiah. Decorate the entry of your home with palm or ponga branches to recall this. Read Matthew 21:1-11



Good Friday 10th Apr: From your home, remember this special Holy Day, and recall the journey Jesus took on the road to the cross to His death for our sins. Set up a cross or crucifix and light a candle Read John 18:1-19:42



12th Apr EASTER SUNDAY from your home state out loud: "He is risen!" Jesus physically rose from the dead, with a transformed body! Fill a vase with fresh flowers, Read Matthew 28:1-10





Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” Perhaps no other component of the Christian life is more important than faith. We cannot purchase it, sell it or give it to our friends. So what is faith and what role does faith play in the Christian life? The dictionary defines *faith* as “belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof.” It also defines *faith* as “belief in and devotion to God.” The Bible has much more to say about faith and how important it is. In fact, it is so important that, without faith, we have no place with God, and it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6). According to the Bible, faith is belief in the one, true God without actually seeing Him.

Where does faith come from? Faith is not something we conjure up on our own, nor is it something we are born with, nor is faith a result of diligence in study or pursuit of the spiritual. Ephesians 2:8-9 makes it clear that faith is a gift from God, not because we deserve it, have earned it, or are worthy to have it. It is not from ourselves; it is from God. It is not obtained by our power or our free will. Faith is simply given to us by God, along with His grace and mercy, according to His holy plan and purpose, and because of that, He gets all the glory.

Why have faith? God designed a way to distinguish between those who belong to Him and those who don't, and it is called faith. Very simply, we need faith to please God. God tells us that it pleases Him that we believe in Him even though we cannot see Him. A key part of Hebrews 11:6 tells us that “he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” This is not to say that we have faith in God just to get something from Him. However, God loves to bless those who are obedient and faithful. We see a perfect example of this in Luke 7:50. Jesus is engaged in dialog with a sinful woman when He gives us a glimpse of why faith is so rewarding. “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” The woman believed in Jesus Christ by faith, and He rewarded her for it. Finally, faith is what sustains us to the end, knowing that by faith we will be in heaven with God for all eternity. “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1:8-9).

Examples of faith. Hebrews chapter 11 is known as the “faith chapter” because in it great deeds of faith are described. By faith Abel offered a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord (v. 4); by faith Noah prepared the ark in a time when rain was unknown (v. 7); by faith Abraham left his home and obeyed God's command to go he knew not where, then willingly offered up his only son (vv. 8-10, 17); by faith Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt (vv. 23-29); by faith Rahab received the spies of Israel and saved her life (v. 31). Many more heroes of the faith are mentioned “who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies” (vv. 33-34). Clearly, the existence of faith is demonstrated by action.

According to the Bible, faith is essential to Christianity. Without demonstrating faith and trust in God, we have no place with Him. We believe in God's existence by faith. Most people have a vague, disjointed notion of who God is but lack the reverence necessary for His exalted position in their lives. These people lack the true faith needed to have an eternal relationship with the God who loves them. Our faith can falter at times, but because it is the gift of God, given to His children, He provides times of trial and testing in order to prove that our faith is real and to sharpen and strengthen it. This is why James tells us to consider it “pure joy” when we fall into trials, because the testing of our faith produces perseverance and matures us, providing the evidence that our faith is real (James 1:2-4).

This Month in Christian History:

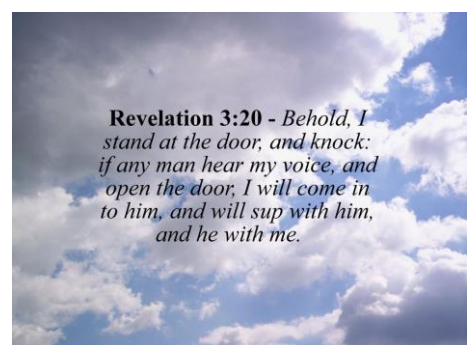
April 1827: Birth of William Holman Hunt, English painter of religious subjects and cofounder of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Hunt's most famous work, *The Light of the World* (1848) represents Christ knocking at the door of the soul (Rev 3:20)



Parish Giving

Please consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. Did you know that St Mary's has to pay for our Vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese? Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

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Revelation 3:20 - Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.