



Holy Week

This week is Holy Week, when Christians remember the special week leading up to Jesus Christ's death on the cross and rising again at Easter.

The churches in Bottesford and surrounding villages are closed at the moment to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, so we can't meet together to remember these amazing events. But we can remember them in our homes!

Here are some thoughts and stories and prayers and things to do, to help us enter into that first Holy Week, and to think about what this means for us today.

Maundy Thursday

On the Thursday of Holy Week, Christians remember that Jesus washed his disciples' feet and that he celebrated the Last Supper with them. But why is it called 'Maundy' Thursday? The word '**Maundy**' comes from the Latin word 'mandatum'. This means commandment, or 'something I tell you to do'. It is '**Maundy Thursday**' because during the Last Supper Jesus commanded his disciples (told them) to love and serve each another.



Let's enter into that first Maundy Thursday and remember...

The Story

If you have a Children's Bible at home, or an Easter story book more suited to the age of your children, then do use that!

Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John's gospel, Chapter 13, verses 1-17 – International Children's Bible)

It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. Jesus knew that it was time for him to leave this world and go back to the Father. He had always loved those who were his own in the world, and he loved them all the way to the end.

Jesus and his followers were at the evening meal. The devil had already persuaded Judas Iscariot to turn against Jesus. (Judas was the son of Simon.)

Jesus knew that the Father had given him power over everything. He also knew that he had come from God and was going back to God.

So during the meal Jesus stood up and took off his outer clothing. Taking a towel, he wrapped it around his waist. Then he poured water into a bowl and began to wash the followers' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Jesus came to Simon Peter. But Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You don't understand what I am doing now. But you will understand later."

Peter said, "No! You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "If I don't wash your feet, then you are not one of my people."

Simon Peter answered, "Lord, after you wash my feet, wash my hands and my head, too!" Jesus said, "After a person has had a bath, his whole body is clean. He needs only to wash his feet. And you men are clean, but not all of you." Jesus knew who would turn against him. That is why Jesus said, "Not all of you are clean."

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and sat down again. Jesus asked, "Do you understand what I have just done for you? You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' And this is right, because that is what I am. I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash each other's feet.

I did this as an example for you. So you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth. A servant is not greater than his master. A messenger is not greater than the one who sent him.

If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

Now that you have heard the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet, I wonder...

- How did this story make you feel?
- Have you ever had your feet washed by someone else? How did it feel?
- How would it feel if it was your mum washing your feet?
- How about if the Queen washed your feet? Or your favourite football player, or superhero, or singer, or gamer?
- Where were you in this story? Were you Jesus, doing the washing? Or Peter, wondering what it was all about? Or Judas, knowing that you would betray Jesus?



In the Palm Sunday story, we remember that Jesus comes into Jerusalem on a donkey, and the crowd shouted Hosanna because he is their King. Now in the foot washing story, here is their King

doing something that a servant in the house would do – washing feet. Dusty, smelly feet! It didn't feel right.

In this foot washing story, Jesus gives us a sign. I like signs. They are things that show us the way. He shows us that to be a follower of Jesus, like his disciples were, we must serve each other. We must do things for other people like Jesus did.

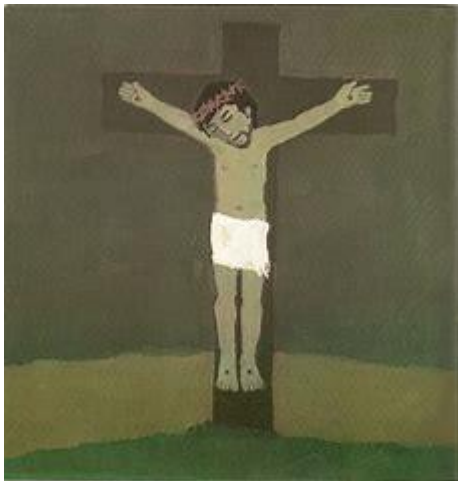
This week, what can you do for someone else? If it's always your mum that makes you a drink, maybe you can make her one? If it's always your dad who reads you a story, you can tell him one!

A Craft

The meal in this story when Jesus washed his disciples' feet is also known as The Last Supper, because it was the last meal that Jesus shared with his friends. Here is a simple way to 'make' The Last Supper using paper, pens and a small box.



Good Friday



Everyone always asks why is it called 'Good' Friday when it is the day that Jesus dies on the cross. It's a good question. Let's see if we can answer that together...

After The Last Supper has finished, Jesus goes out to pray in the garden. He is arrested, asked questions by the authorities and finally, the same crowd that shouted Hosanna on Palm Sunday, shout out "Crucify him", which means they want him to die on a wooden cross.

This part is a sad story, and it is OK to feel sad about it.

The Story

The death of Jesus (John's gospel, Chapter 19, verses 16-19, 26-30)

So Pilate gave Jesus to them to be killed on a cross. The soldiers took charge of Jesus.

Carrying his own cross, Jesus went out to a place called The Place of the Skull. (In the Jewish language this place is called Golgotha.) There they nailed Jesus to the cross. They also put two other men on crosses, one on each side of Jesus with Jesus in the middle.

Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. It read: "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower he loved standing there. He said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." Then he said to the follower, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this follower took her to live in his home.

After this, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scripture come true, he said, "I am thirsty." There was a jar full of vinegar there, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. Then they put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' mouth.

Jesus tasted the vinegar. Then he said, "It is finished." He bowed his head and died.

Now that we have read about how Jesus died, I wonder....

- How did this story make you feel?
- How do you think the crowd felt who had shouted, "Crucify him"? Have you ever wished for something bad to happen to someone that you didn't like? How would you feel if it actually happened?
- How do you think Jesus felt? He had to carry his own cross. Have you ever had to carry something that was really too heavy for you?
- Jesus made sure his own mother had someone to look after her after he dies. How easy is it to think of other people when you are in trouble yourself?



A Craft

You can make your own Easter garden like the one in the picture above! You need some kind of garden tray, some soil, a small plant pot or small cardboard tube to be the tomb Jesus is buried in, a large stone to cover the entrance to the tomb, and three wooden crosses (you can lash together two twigs to make each cross, or else use lollipop sticks).

So how is this story 'good'?

This is entering into the mystery of the Easter story, and it's ok to feel that it's tricky to understand. Have you ever heard Jesus called the Saviour – someone who saves? Have you ever wondered who he saves, and what from? So, the 'good' news of this story is that if you are a follower of Jesus today, when he died on the cross all that time ago, he took with him all the bad things you have done and will ever do. He took them so that when you do something wrong, and you are sorry for it, you can pray about it to God, and he will forgive you.



Jesus saves you and me from our sins, from the things that we do wrong, so long as we love God and we are sorry for what we have done.

Perhaps you can make a paper cross like the one above, and write on it some of the things you know you have done wrong – like not sharing your favourite toy with your brother, or calling someone names in the playground... In some quiet time you can say sorry to God for each one.

A Prayer

*Dear God, thank you that you love us and hear our prayers.
us.*

*We are sorry for..... Please forgive
Help us to think about other people before ourselves. Amen.*

Easter Sunday

Easter Day is usually the biggest party the Church has all year! We have already heard and thought about why Jesus dying on the cross is 'good news' for me and you. What Easter Day reminds us is that Jesus dying on the cross wasn't the end of this story... because in three days Jesus rose from the dead and is alive with us today! (This is more of the mystery of Easter, and it is still ok to think it is tricky to understand.)



This year, we will have to party at home with our families – which is also 'good'! I wonder if you have already had some treats today, like a chocolate egg or two maybe! Perhaps you can't see other members of your family today, like your grandparents, because we are all helping to stop people getting coronavirus. But you can call them, or see them on your computer.

This is a happy ending to the Easter story, and it is definitely ok to feel happy about it!

The Story

After Jesus died on the cross, his body was taken down and buried in a tomb, with a large stone covering the entrance.

The Empty Tomb (John's gospel, Chapter 20, verses 1-18)

Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. It was still dark. Mary saw that the large stone had been moved away from the tomb.

So Mary ran to Simon Peter and the other follower (the one Jesus loved). Mary said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb. We don't know where they have put him." So Peter and the other follower started for the tomb.

They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter. So the other follower reached the tomb first. He bent down and looked in. He saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. Then following him came Simon Peter. He went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there. He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up and laid in a different place from the strips of linen.

Then the other follower, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. He saw and believed. (These followers did not yet understand from the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from death.) Then the followers went back home.

But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. While she was still crying, she bent down and looked inside the tomb. She saw two angels dressed in white. They were sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She answered, "They have taken away my Lord. I don't know where they have put him." When Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?" Mary thought he was the gardener. So she said to him, "Did you take him away, sir? Tell me where you put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." Mary turned toward Jesus and said in the Jewish language, "Rabboni." (This means Teacher.)

Jesus said to her, "Don't hold me. I have not yet gone up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them this: 'I am going back to my Father and your Father. I am going back to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and said to the followers, "I saw the Lord!" And she told them what Jesus had said to her.

Now that we have heard about how Jesus rose from the dead and is alive, I wonder...

- How did this story make you feel?
- This story has angels in it. Have you ever dressed up as an angel? Can you think of other Bible stories that have angels in them?
- Where are you in this story? Are you Simon and the other follower of Jesus, who raced to the tomb? Are you Mary Magdalene, who thought Jesus was the gardener? Are you an angel, or Jesus?
- Maybe you could act out this part of the story?



If you made an Easter garden, today's the day to move the large stone away from the entrance of the tomb, because Jesus isn't there, he has risen from the dead! This is good news for you and me because now that Jesus is alive, he is able to be with us every day, right now.

This is good to know at the moment, because of the coronavirus situation. You might be worried because your school is closed and you can't see your friends, or because you can't visit your family who don't live with you. It is ok to be worried and it is good to talk to someone when you feel this way, like your mum. When you are a follower of Jesus, you can also talk to God in a prayer about your worries, and ask him to help you.



Jesus is alive today, and he promises to be with us, when we are happy and sad, excited and worried, because he loves us.

And the next time you eat a hot cross bun... I hope you remember something of this first Easter story.

I hope you have a very Happy Easter.