

Reflections on Holy Week 2014

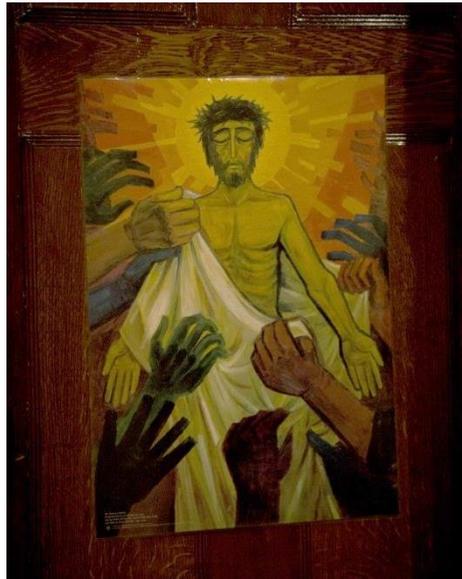


Fr Gary gather gathers peoples' thoughts after a memorable week.

A really good attendance in both churches as Palm Sunday saw another Holy Week being kept in the parish. At Hanslope, as is the custom, the service started on the Market Square with the blessing of palms before a procession to church.

HOLY MONDAY...

Ann Nixon-Caney writes: This was my first Stations of the Cross and I didn't know quite what to expect - a short amble round the pictures with a description, perhaps? I should have known better! The fourteen stations depicted the stages of Jesus' last week, and as we gathered at each one Fr Gary announced the Theme and studying it we said a short prayer. He read a piece of scripture and gave us a brief thought upon which we meditated in a profound silence before saying "Lord have mercy" and proceeding to the next one to the lovely music of Taize and the words "Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom." It was so spiritual, very moving, a wonderful way to start Holy Week and I came away focused on the enormity of what Jesus suffered for me, for the forgiveness of my sins. I will definitely make the effort to come to this special service every year - and



there was a cup of tea afterwards to give us time to absorb what we had just experienced!

John Sorrell adds:

A wonderful start to Holy Week – a meditation, walking through the 14 Stations of the Cross pausing at each one to consider: the enormous pain and suffering Jesus willing accepted on our behalf for our redemption and to reflect on those people who interacted with him along the way (His mother, John, Veronica, Simon of Cyrene, the Roman Soldiers and Joseph of Arimathea). At each station our meditation led to a simple prayer identifying the particular needs of ourselves and our world and lifting



them up to Jesus at the foot of his Cross for his healing. Between stations we sang the simple words: "Jesus remember me when you come into your Kingdom", the words spoken to Jesus by the thief on the Cross. Powerful, uplifting, cleansing and forgiving. Praise the Lord!

HOLY TUESDAY...



Jackie Gommon (pictured centre) takes up the story of Holy Week as 34 members of the two churches went to Birmingham Cathedral for the annual Christm Mass.

On awaking for a trip to Birmingham, I had two thoughts come to mind.. The first, I had never been to the Cathedral there, which was exciting for me as I love architecture and the another I have never seen the Christm Mass..There is always a first for both accounts.

Meeting with our friends from Hanslope church, for that is what we are now, friends... travelling, two churches as one...with an age from the youngest being two to the eldest being eighty. And incidentally all the children were great all day and a credit to their family and also to the church.

We arrived at Birmingham Cathedral a beautiful 18th Century, Baroque style building by Thomas Archer.. It was stunning. We were seated and a



mini rehearsal of hymns and responses were being practiced so that the preparation for this special service was perfect..

The procession began and It was a privilege to be there with our Father Gary and

Father Robert being in that procession looking out for them as they made their way to the high alter with their fellow priests . I can't imagine what they were feeling, but for myself this was the start of something very special... The mass started and Bishop Jonathan gave a wonderful sermon to include a talk to all the priests reminding them as to their promises which progressed to the renewal of their commitment vows which was very humbling.





Moving on to why we were there.. to witness the blessing of the Oil of Chrism. The procession of the Oils, The oil for the sick, The Oils for the Catechumens and the consecration of the oil for Chrism.. used in our services here in Castlethorpe and Hanslope for Baptism, Confirmation and Healing. These were carried and placed before the Bishop to bless...

A truly wonderful service, very moving, giving time to thinking about our own journeys in our church

and for my part, seeing, and witnessing the priests renewal of their promises, together with the blessing of the oils, this was a great privilege .The singing was beautiful, and the hymn during communion, 'What do you want of me Lord'.. and the chant sung in Latin at the end ... 'Ubi Caritas et amore..Ubi caritas Deus ibi est'... translated.. 'Where charity and love are, God is there'. Which says it all...

And in this service there was a fellowship between a few hundred people, which gives great hope for the future of our own church.

This was followed by lunch across the road, (at the Colmore Bar and Grill) the food on the menu was brilliant, especially for the children having a three course meal for a very low price... Thoroughly enjoyed by everyone..There was laughter, fun, happiness but most of all.. love with one another...



Maria Madeley adds: I thoroughly enjoyed the Chrism Mass Service; it was a beautiful service and I felt very welcome and at peace as I'd taken my seat in the Cathedral. It was a privilege to support both Father Gary and Father Robert as they renewed their ordination vows. A great day out with my family and my Church family!



Mason, aged 2 and a bit, gets a good view