

## **What does the Resurrection mean for me?...**

*(A parishioner responds to Fr Jock's invitation in his Easter Day Homily)*

The Resurrection is not just an event in itself; it is the culmination of Jesus' mission. He came into this world to teach us, and to show us, by the way he lived His life, how we should live our lives. In Luke's gospel (10:27), when the lawyer asks what he must do to obtain eternal life – i.e. to rise from our temporal life, through death, to life with God – Jesus prompts him into coming up with his own answer - "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. And you must love your neighbor as yourself." – and then highlights the nature of that love of neighbour in the story he makes up about the Good Samaritan; this story not only answers the question "Who is my neighbour?" but also the nature of love – the Samaritan puts himself wholly at the service of the Jew who has been attacked. In chapter 25 of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' vision of the final judgment, those called to new life with God are those who have served their fellow human beings.

Jesus lives out this message – teaching, healing, fulminating against injustice and hypocrisy – even though he knows it will put him at odds with the authorities. Rather than stray from this path, He accepts the consequence, which is the cross and death. He Himself, therefore, is a living parable for us in that we have to be prepared to walk the hard road, and accept – indeed embrace - whatever cross comes our way if we too are to know the fulfilment of the promise contained in Jesus' resurrection. And that is much easier to say than to do. I don't think I am speaking just for myself when I say that it is hard to commit oneself totally. The temptation is always to compromise, to quietly ignore opportunities to move closer to God by stretching out to our fellow human beings, to look for the easy way. The message is stark – Jesus didn't take the easy way through life, to death before His resurrection.

For me, there is another aspect to the resurrection. At the Last Supper, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the disciples telling them that this was His body. When I picture this scene, instead of the small white disc we see at Mass, I think of a large round Eastern Mediterranean flatbread which Jesus tears into pieces to share with the others. This large flatbread is His body and he shares it among His followers so that when He dies, His body is still at work in the world, reborn in those who follow Him. If Jesus is not alive in me, then for me the resurrection has effectively not happened but, for those who actively try to live the life of Christ in this world, Jesus is alive in them and working through them. But to be Jesus in this world, we have to do as he did and show the love – compassion, respect, generosity, fairness and all the other things that make up the love that Jesus talks about – to our fellow human beings and, again, to accept the crosses that we are called to carry and not shy away from them.

In summary, the resurrection contains a wonderful promise. At the Last Supper, Jesus shared the cup of wine with the apostles saying that "this is the Blood of the new and eternal covenant". This covenant for me is a covenant of our oneness with Jesus and that if we allow Him to live in and with us in this world, we can continue to live in and with Him in the next.

*(Jim Roarty)*