



RECTOR'S LETTER



03 April 2015

Dear Friends

Who would have guessed that already, today would be my last Rectors letter to you, before I say farewell in two weeks' time. As mentioned in my vestry report, this time with you was a necessary time both for my ministerial development and also for you. I have, over this time, seen many of you mature spiritually. Thank you for an incredible outpouring of love, prayer and support during my tenure as your rector. Amanda, Aunty Miena, Caleb and Connor reiterate my words as they say thank you, thank you, and thank you. The boys will undoubtedly miss the Sunday school and all of you who have made them feel so welcome.

I have no doubt that you will demonstrate the same love, prayer and support to Revd Selwyn, his wife Beverley and their three boys.

As Revd Selwyn will begin his ministry soon in this part of God's vineyard, please ensure that you take your pledging/ tithing commitments seriously. Remember that this parish needs at least a R120 000 per month to tick over and it is not fair, that he comes in and is forced to speak to you about your pledging commitments. The parish will provide you with a brief break down of pledges received and expenditure at the beginning of next month. It will either be included in the pew leaflet or sent to you via an SMS.

Tradition compels us as Priests to gently shake off the relationships that we have built at parishes over the years, and so it is important that you and I understand that once the new Rector is licensed at this parish he becomes the most important person in this scenario.

In a sense, Revd Selwyn becomes the Chief Rabbi at St Oswald's and not me, nor Revd Elizabeth or Revd Ernest, not Revd Clever, the retired clergy, or the churchwardens will fulfil his role. He becomes the first point of call as the Rector. The chapelries should know that their clergy are the first point of call! Do remember, though, that Revd Selwyn might change this process.

I cannot end my letter without reminding you that today is Maundy Thursday, and in our liturgy we begin what the church calls the *Triduum* (from the Latin meaning three days). This is often referred to as the Three Great Days, namely Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil. The lectionary highlights these important events with sound theology and I quote:

"As we observe the Triduum we enter into the Paschal Mystery in which the passion-death-resurrection of Jesus Christ saves and redeems us. Easter Day is a celebration of utter joy and introduces the 50 days of Easter Celebration.

The Triduum is therefore a single, unitary celebration of the whole Paschal Mystery. It is not merely an historical rehearsal of a sequence of three events over three succeeding days but is a solemn entering into the saving mystery of the passion-death-resurrection event in the life of

Jesus. That is one event, we do not enter in Good Friday as those who do not know how this will end, and we do not enter in the resurrection those who do not know where it began and how we got there. That is why there is this essential unity to the Three days expressed in the fact that there is only one beginning and one ending to the liturgy of the Triduum.

The unity of this single celebration is clearly shown in the structure of the services. There is a greeting at the start of the Maundy Thursday Eucharist, but no dismissal, no formal beginning or dismissal at the Good Friday devotions, and no greeting at the service of Light that starts the Great Vigil of Easter. It is only at the end of the Vigil Service that the congregation joins in the joyful dismissal that send people out to love and serve the Lord with a great cry of "Alleluia! Alleluia!"

This article reminds us that that these three days are the most important in our church's Calendar year. They are integrated and one interlinks with another so the great challenge for us of the three great days is to commit ourselves to attending these important Triduum Masses. Let's not just use this weekend as time away - you will always have enough time for this!

Tonight we have a Foot-washing Mass, then tomorrow at 12 noon, a three- hour Devotion will be conducted. For this Mass you are encouraged to bring a flower or rose petals that you will be able to lay down in memory of those who have died, especially remembering our Lord Jesus. We will celebrate our Easter Vigil Mass early on Sunday Morning (06h30) and the Easter Mass at 09h00 will include Baptisms.

Once again, come and join me on this wonderful three day journey, making it the beginning of a new era in your life.

God Bless you, as you continue as a community, to love and to serve God, one another and creation.

As we soon say farewell to you all, I would like to add this prayer sent to me by my good friend Revd Maureen Allchin in the UK. It gives you a wonderful overview of what the ministry is all about and how I have felt about it here at St Oswald's.

"It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

**The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.**

**We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.**

**No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No programme accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.**

**That is what we are about.
We plant a seed that will one day grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.**

**We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.**

**It may be incomplete,
but it is a beginning,
a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.**

**We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference
between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.**

We are prophets of a future not our own."

**composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden
in Nov. 1979 for a celebration of departed priests.*

Amanda, the boys and I wish you a happy and Blessed Easter!

With much love,

Revd Canon Jerome Francis