

# MY DEAR THEOPHILUS

VOLUME 3/ ISSUE 4 (APRIL 2019)

## NEWS FROM AROUND THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

### Anglican leaders express sadness and solidarity after Notre Dame cathedral blaze in Paris

A serious fire which caused devastating damage to the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris has drawn expressions of solidarity from Anglican leaders. The Roman Catholic cathedral is seen by many French people as their country's mother church. In its 850-year history it has witnessed much of the dramatic moments of Parisian history. An automatic fire alarm sounded at 6.20 pm CEST (4.20 pm GMT) on Monday evening (15 April) and security staff cleared the cathedral. But there was no visible sign of fire. The alarm sounded again just over 20 minutes later, at 6.43 pm, by which time the cathedral's security staff could see the fire.



Dear Parish Family:

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!

Mary Magdalene woke on that morning the way many of us have woken up after the death of someone we love. She woke with a sense of disorientation and confusion; she is in a fog. Something is wrong, and then it hits her; Jesus is gone; Jesus is dead.

Mary made her way to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus.

When Mary gets to the tomb she is horrified to see that Jesus' body is missing. Even after the crucifixion, there is no dignity for Jesus even in death, someone has stolen his body.

Then she sees a man; a man she thinks is the gardener.

This is no accident; this is a key detail! Mary asks the man that she thinks is the where the body of Jesus is. Then Jesus, speaks her name, just as the Spirit of God breaths over creation, Jesus breathes it out --- Mary. At once her eyes are open and she sees the Risen Lord. She recognizes who the gardener is!

Remember the beginning of John's Gospel? In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and through him all things were made. John's gospel starts with creation, recalling Genesis and the act of creation. Genesis tells us that God created the universe from nothing, and that all of creation was good. But through Adam and Eve, who rejected God, sin entered the world. Adam is the failed gardener of Eden.

Jesus is the New Adam, the new gardener. Just as sin and death entered the world through one man, the failed gardener of Eden, now life flows from the resurrected Jesus: Jesus is the first born of all the new creation. Jesus is the gardener of the new garden, and the resurrection of Jesus is the reaffirmation that God created all things and saw that it was good. It is God's good creation, and we are living in the wake of the resurrection, and are part of that good creation.

The impossible has happened; the greatest of all of the miracles, Jesus has risen from the dead never to die again, he has destroyed sin and death and he lives!

The resurrection is not an abstract idea; the resurrection is not wishful thinking; the resurrection is not a warm, fuzzy feeling—the resurrection is the reality that Mary Magdalene and the apostles encountered in a living and loving way—they encountered the Risen Jesus who transformed their very existence by the forgiveness of sins and new life in him—not a temporary transformation, but one that is as eternal as the God who created the universe. It is accomplished. Jesus is alive.

Jesus is here to make us a new creation too. He starts by tilling the soil in the garden of our lives. He has already turned things upside down by his own glorious resurrection, and now he is turning our lives upside down. Allow God to work in you to make your life flourish. If we give ourselves to this Gardener Jesus, who knows what might grow and where it will grow. Join Jesus in the garden!

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Your servant in Christ,

The Rev. Chester J. Makowski, Rector



**EASTER 2019 MESSAGE FROM  
THE MOST REV. MICHAEL CURRY, 27<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDING BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

The Rt. Reverend Barbara Harris was the first woman ordained and consecrated a bishop in The Episcopal Church and in the Anglican Communion. In her memoir, entitled *Hallelujah, Anyhow!* she quotes an old Gospel hymn that says it this way:

*Hallelujah anyhow  
Never let your troubles get you down*

*When your troubles come your way  
Hold your hands up high and say  
Hallelujah anyhow!*

When I get to Heaven, I want to meet one person, and her name is Mary Magdalene. Because if ever there was another Hallelujah, Anyhow sister, it was

Mary Magdalene. And her life, and her example, tells us what it means to follow in the way of Jesus, in the Way of Love.

Mary Magdalene showed up when others would not. Mary Magdalene spoke up when others remained silent. Mary Magdalene stood up when others sat down.

John's Gospel tells us that when many of the disciples fled and abandoned Jesus, Mary Magdalene stood by him at the cross. Hallelujah, Anyhow.

Against the odds, swimming against the current, Mary Magdalene was there.

John's Gospel says in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter, early in the morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene and some of the other women went to the tomb. Hallelujah, Anyhow.

They went to the tomb when it didn't make any sense. They went to the tomb when the evidence was against them. Jesus was dead. They knew that. The power of the Empire had crushed the hope of love. They knew that. And they got up in the morning and went to the tomb anyhow. Hallelujah, Anyhow.

But more than that, John's Gospel says it was dark. It was dark. That's not just the time of day in John's Gospel. The darkness in John is the domain of evil. In John's Gospel when Judas leaves the Last Supper to betray Jesus, John inserts a parenthetical remark. When Judas leaves to betray him, John says, "And it was night." The darkness is the domain of wrong, of hatred, of bigotry, of violence, the domain of sin and death and horror.

And early in the morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, Hallelujah, Anyhow.

The truth is, she didn't know that Jesus was alive. She was just doing what love does. Caring for her beloved, her Savior, her friend, in his time of death, to give him the last rites of burial. And when she got to the tomb, and the other women with them, they eventually discovered that Jesus was alive, and in the silence of the night, in the moments of despair, in the moments of the worst darkness, God had done something incredible. God had raised Jesus from the dead. The truth is,

nobody saw Jesus rise from the dead, because God had done it secretly and quietly, when nobody was looking.

When I was in high school, I learned a poem composed by James Russell Lowell. He wrote it in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in one of the darkest periods in American history, when this country was torn asunder by the existence of chattel slavery in our midst. In this great land of freedom, there were slaves being held in bondage. And this nation literally went to war, tearing itself apart, trying to find the way to do what was right. And James Russell Lowell wrote, in the midst of this darkness, in this dark hour:

*Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone and strong . . .  
Though her portion be a scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong  
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own  
Hallelujah, Anyhow.*

Christ is risen. The Lord is risen, indeed.

God love you, God bless you, and may God hold us all in those almighty hands of love.

+The Most Rev. Michael Curry



***JOIN US FOR A SIX PART SERIES WITH THE RT. REV. DR. N.T. WRIGHT  
ON THE RESURRECTION AT 9:15 IN THE PARISH HALL STARTING THE  
FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.***



***FEATURED HOLY PERSON OF  
THE MONTH  
DIETRICH BONHOEFFER  
PASTOR AND THEOLOGIAN  
9 April  
By James Kiefer***

Bonhoeffer was born in 1906, son of a professor of psychiatry and neurology at the University of Berlin. He was an outstanding student, and at the age of 25 became a lecturer in systematic theology at the same University. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Bonhoeffer became a leading spokesman for the Confessing Church, the center of Protestant resistance to the Nazis. He organized and for a time led the underground seminary of the Confessing Church. His book *Life Together* describes the life of the Christian community in that seminary, and his book *The Cost of Discipleship* attacks what he calls “cheap grace,” meaning grace used as an excuse for moral laxity. Bonhoeffer had been taught not to “resist the powers that be,” but he came to believe that to do so was sometimes the right choice. In 1939 his brother-in-law introduced him to a group planning the overthrow of Hitler, and he made significant contributions to their work. (He was at this time an employee of the Military Intelligence Department.) He was arrested in April 1943 and imprisoned in Berlin. After the failure of the attempt on Hitler’s life in April 1944, he was sent first to Buchenwald and then to Schoenberg Prison. His life was spared, because he had a relative who stood high in the government; but then this relative was himself implicated in anti-Nazi plots. On Sunday 8 April 1945, he had just finished conducting a service of worship at Schoenberg, when two soldiers came in, saying, “Prisoner Bonhoeffer, make ready and come with us,” the standard summons to a condemned prisoner. As he left, he said to another prisoner, “This is the end -- but for me, the beginning -- of life.” He was hanged the next day, less than a week before the Allies reached the camp.

His works in print (paperback) include the following:

*The Martyred Christian* (160 readings from his works, 288p)

*Letters and Papers from Prison*

*Creation and Fall and Temptation*

*Meditating on the Word*

*Life Together*

*The Cost of Discipleship*

*Ethics*

*Spiritual Care*

*The Psalms: Prayer Book of the Bible*

*Christ the Center*

Some of his later writings insist that many Christians do not take seriously enough the existence and power of evil. Because of this and other statements of his, some theological advocates of “secularist Christianity” in the 1960s attempted to claim him as their own. In my judgement, a study of his writings (even his later writings) as a whole does not support this claim. However, it is true that he never had a chance to edit his prison letters and papers, or put them into context, and accordingly it is not surprising that they contain some statements that baffle the reader.

The following hymn was written by him in the concentration camp, shortly before his death:

By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,  
and confidently waiting come what may,  
we know that God is with us night and morning,  
and never fails to greet us each new day.

Yet is this heart by its old foe tormented,  
still evil days bring burdens hard to bear;  
Oh, give our frightened souls the sure salvation  
for which, O Lord, You taught us to prepare.

And when this cup You give is filled to brimming

with bitter suffering, hard to understand,  
we take it thankfully and without trembling,  
out of so good and so beloved a hand.

Yet when again in this same world You give us  
the joy we had, the brightness of Your Sun,  
we shall remember all the days we lived through,  
and our whole life shall then be Yours alone.

This hymn appears in the 1982 Episcopal Hymnal (695). The translator is F. Pratt Green (1903- ) listed in hymnal indexes sometimes under Green and sometimes under Pratt Green. The translation copyright is Hope Publishing Company 1974.



***PLEASE LET US KNOW IF SOMEONE NEEDS A HOME VISIT***

If you know of anyone who needs a home visit because they cannot get to Church, please call the Parish Office, or let Fr. Makowski know. Either Fr. Makowski or one of our Lay Eucharistic Visitors will call on them. If you have a pastoral emergency, please call Fr. Makowski at 713.299.7675.

***THERE IS POWER IN PRAYER***

Praying is something that we all can do, young and old, rich and poor, tall and short. Please pray for everyone on our Prayer List.



MAKE A *Joyful* NOISE



***Don't forget to bring pork and beans for our Mannafest outreach.***



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

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