

Dear friends in Christ,

HOLY WEEK and EASTER

The commemoration of Christ's death and resurrection is the heart of the Christian year, and the heart of the Christian faith. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, we are pilgrims of the 'paschal mystery', the dying and rising of Jesus in which we are Baptised and which gives meaning to everything we are and everything we do as Christians.

When one of the 4th century Desert Fathers, the earliest Christian monks, was asked 'What do you do all day in the monastery?' he answered, 'We fall and we rise, we fall and we rise.' I think that is still a good summary of what it is like to a Christian today, living in a world of uncertainty and injustice, and in a Church which is living with change and challenge.

That is why it's so important for us to allow ourselves to experience the services and the devotions of Holy Week, so that, once again, we can be formed and re-formed this Easter by the death and resurrection of Christ.

In Holy Week, and in the next few months, some important events are coming up which celebrate and affirm the ministry of ordained and lay people in our church, and I asking all those involved in ministry to make it a priority to take part in them:

CHRISM MASS – Maundy Thursday, 17th April, 11.00am in the Cathedral

The Oil of Chrism (for Baptism) and the Oil of Healing (for the Sacrament of Healing) are consecrated by the Bishop, the Bishop and Clergy re-affirm the promises of their Ordination, and Lay Readers re-affirm the commitment made at their Licensing.

- All members of the Clergy (in alb and white stole) and all Lay Readers (in cassock, surplice and scarf) are invited to participate, together with all those involved in ministry, and all members of the Diocese are invited to join them.

- Clergy should bring emptied and cleaned Oil Stocks, to be filled for ministry in the coming year.

- The simple lunch after the service is open to all, but for catering please let us know you will be coming, and if you have special dietary requirements.

FESTIVAL OF LAY MINISTRIES - Thursday 15th May, 6.30pm in the Cathedral

Lay Ministries of all kinds provide so much within the charges and their gifts and time are greatly appreciated. At this service there will be a dedication and re-commitment of Lay Worship Leaders (for Service of the Word and Communion from the Reserved Sacrament), Lay Eucharistic Ministers (those bearing the chalice in worship, those taking home communion to the housebound) and Lay Pastoral Ministers (those who visit, take Communion to people at home, etc). All those present will receive new updated Authorisations for their ministry, and will be able to meet and be encouraged by others around the Diocese who are serving their congregations in the same way.

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD - Sunday 29th June, 4.00pm in the Cathedral

Ordinations in the SEC are moving back to Petertide at the end of June, from Michaelmas at the end of September. Please mark the date of the next Diocesan Ordination on the Feast of St Peter and St Paul, Sunday 29th June, when the Revd Ross Stirling-Young, deacon and Assistant Curate at St Columba, Stanley, will be ordained to the Priesthood. All clergy and lay readers are invited to robe, and all members of the Diocese are welcome to attend. As is usual at the Ordination of a Priest, the priests who are present are invited to join in the laying-on of hands. Please pray for Ross as he prepares for his Ordination, and for his continuing ministry at St Columba's and the Cathedral.

With prayer and warmest regards for Holy Week, and, when it comes, a very happy Easter!

+Ian St Andrews