



# *Vision*-UPBEAT

Easter 2017

## **Minister's Jottings**

Paul might have started one of his letters thus: 'Dear brothers and sisters of the Easter Faith. Blessings be to you who celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. May that sure knowledge and hope founded in Christ be your comfort and strength through all your trials and persecutions. Keep at all times our Lord's gift of salvation in your hearts and minds as you deal one with another, and remain in good spirits as you take on the calling given to you by our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Maybe that greeting could sum up Easter, and what it are to be people of the Easter Faith, people who live in the faith of the crucified and risen Christ.

Last Good Friday at St Leonard's, I reflected upon the crucifixion of Christ. One or two there thought that it was so graphic that it made them uncomfortable, one person said that it made her squirm. I wonder how Christ was feeling at that time? But let's look at it in maybe a different way.

A brother loved his sister very much, and it was coming up to her birthday. He knew that she really needed a particular present, even if she didn't want it as much as things she saw in the shops. His sister liked all the fancy things, clothes, make-up, jewellery, CD's and alike. But her brother saw what she really wanted, even though she didn't understand that she needed and wanted it.

Now, there was one problem, the brother was on a fixed income, that of weekly pocket money. He had £40.00 saved up, which was all he had. The gift also cost £40.00. If he bought it, he wouldn't have even enough money to buy himself some sweets at the weekend. But he decided to buy the present, and give it to his sister.

So the day of her birthday came, her brother was flat broke; he had nothing left except his gift. His sister opened it, looked at it and was just about to say thank you with a note of disappointment, when something stirred inside her, and she remembered that this must have been a costly present, in fact, she deep down knew how much she needed it, and she knew how much it cost.

I will finish the story after this brief paragraph. Easter is the giving of the most costly gift the world has ever known. The price was to give up the life of the Son of God, to pay the ultimate price so that others could be the recipients of salvation, grace, and faith. Because of that sacrifice through total obedience in Love for the Father, Christ was raised; breaking down the shackles of sin and despair, offering a new order through love and faith, given a new life through a new commandment, love one another.

But that is on one side, the other side is the receiving of that gift. We have a responsibility to accept the gift, to take it, to use it, to love it. Given freely but at a cost, received, but also at what cost?

We have to use the gift given by Christ through the Easter event! We have to renew ourselves through His resurrection, to be more committed to the vision of resurrection, for life through mission, through social outreach, through our personal and spiritual development. WE HAVE TO ACCEPT HIS GIFT AND LIVE WITH IT, DAY IN AND DAY OUT. Not just on a Sunday, not just on Easter Bunny Sunday, but every day, with everyone we meet, in everything we do. Let us not be socially embarrassed by being people of the Easter Faith, but let us share His gift amongst our fellowship, amongst strangers who come in, and amongst those outside, who might not recognise the gift given through Easter.

The sister did use the present, she loved it, you see she was blind, and what he bought was computer learning and word processing soft wear so that she could continue writing and studying at the local college. She went on to finish her degree in French and English, and now is the head of disability

learning for the Open University. See how much can be gained from accepting and receiving the Easter gift, the costly gift, and the costly response in receiving it.....Using and living it.

Happy Easter; and Blessing from the Lord Jesus Christ, and as Paul finishes 2 Corinthians; ‘May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all’. Amen.

Jon