

*A Prayer for Easter-tide*

*Dear Father,*

*Life can be difficult.*

*Sometimes it feels as though the sun has stopped shining, just as it did on that first Good Friday.*

*Sometimes it can feel as though we are stuck in the darkness and it seems impossible that the light will ever shine again.*

*And yet the reality is that Friday did move on, into the most glorious Sunday.*

*The Son did rise - and his light shines on, transforming the darkest of times, holding out hope and peace and life to all who will turn and look into his face.*

*He is alive.*

*He will help us.*

*Thank you Father, for Jesus.*

*Amen.*

**Dear Friends, Jill writes,** when Barry said he was going to retire someone remarked that he hadn't been here long enough! Looking back over the last 20 years since we arrived in Whickham we have so much to be thankful for. When we



moved here, the whole family was warmly welcomed, and you shared in the excitement of a new baby born to the rectory, and who arrived in time for Christmas. Helped by you all we soon settled into Whickham life, and were made to feel very much part of the St Mary's Church family. You have supported us with love and care at births, weddings and sadly through family bereavement. We are very grateful for the help and encouragement you have given to us both, and to me in my Reader ministry,

including my pastoral and children's work, and the taking of funerals. We've had so much fun at Church events, such as Summer, Christmas and Wedding Fairs, Concerts, Day Trips, Fashion Shows and Tea Dances! There have been challenges too, especially during the Covid Restrictions. I always remember the time we came out of church and as we were singing our first hymn together as a congregation on Church Green, (we weren't allowed to sing in church) a beautiful rainbow appeared, reminding us of a hope filled future and of God's presence and love with us. As we move onto the new adventure of retirement, we take with us fond memories. We will continue to live in Whickham, but will miss being at St Mary's; though that said, St Mary's will always be a big part of who we are.

**Hi, Barry here.** I still can't believe we are retiring. Ever since we announced our 'leaving' we've felt very emotional, but so grateful for these years of ministry, of laughter, of challenge, of exploring faith together and of being a part of the wonderful community of Whickham. To be able to work together with organisations, schools, businesses, politicians and our neighbouring churches is not just a joy, it generates a sense of togetherness and unity, which I'm sure will continue into the future. I can make this statement with confidence, because St Mary's has stood firm with the people of Whickham for some 900 years; and often through times of great unrest. It will be always known as a place of understanding, hope, worship, peace and celebration... a place where God in Christ is known and shared for all. Whenever someone leaves somewhere, it is not 'an ending', it is a 'new beginning' and what we take with us, is the love and friendship we have received from you. So, as we begin a new adventure, with all of its excitement, twists and turns we thank you, the people of Church and Community, for making us welcome and for sharing the journey. It is true to say, endings are never easy but they make new beginnings possible. I think this truth lies at the very heart of the Easter message? Thanks for a cracking time! With love and prayers from **Barry, Jill and Family**

*May God Grant You Always....*

*A Sunbeam To Warm You,*

*A Moonbeam To Charm You,*

*A Sheltering Angel So Nothing  
Can Harm You.*

*Laughter To Cheer You .*

*Faithful Friends Near You*

*And Whenever You Pray, Heaven  
To Hear You*

## **Magazine Information**

Please submit any information,  
articles, poems, pictures etc. for:

**MAY MAGAZINE**

by

**Monday 22nd April**

\*\*\* The magazines will be ready to collect from Sat 4th May \*\*\*

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## CALENDAR OF SERVICES AND EVENTS IN APRIL 2024

<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>1.30pm Group 67</b>	Bank Holiday: No meeting
<b>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>NO SERVICE</b>	
<b>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter	<b>8am Holy Communion</b> <b>10am Sung Eucharist</b> <b>3pm Gibside Choral Evensong</b>	Acts 4.32-35 1 John 1.1-2.2 John 20.19-end
<b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>1.30pm Mothers' Union</b>	St Mary's Church & Centre
<b>Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>10am Holy Communion OR</b> <b>Service of the Word</b>	
<b>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>11am Baptisms</b>	
<b>Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter	<b>10.00am Sung Eucharist</b> <b>12.00pm Baptism</b>	Acts 3.12-19 1 John 3.1-7 Luke 24.36b-48
<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>10am Holy Communion OR</b> <b>Service of the Word</b>	
<b>Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2024</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	<b>10am Sung Eucharist</b> <b>11.15am APCM</b>	Acts 4.5-12 1 John 3.16-end John 10.11-18
<b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>10am Holy Communion OR</b> <b>Service of the Word</b>	
<b>Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>11am Baptisms</b>	
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter	<b>10am Sung Eucharist</b>  <b>3pm Choral Evensong</b>	Acts 8.26-end 1 John 4.7-end John 15.1-8  Isaiah 60.1-14 Revelation 3.1-13

**Group 67** No meeting in April

**Mothers Union** meet on Monday April 8<sup>th</sup> at 1 30pm **in the Centre.**

There will be a Bring & Buy for everyone to get involved in and bring a book of your choice; one you have read and would recommend (or not!), one you read years ago! or perhaps your favourite book as a child.

# *Congratulations*

## *on the Diamond wedding*

of Liz and Alan Thompson , celebrated on March 14th 1963  
and to Sylvia and Raymond Burn who celebrated their Diamond wedding  
on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1963. Best wishes from us all.

## **An Important letter from our Churchwardens:**

Dear Friends,

As we start the interregnum and at the start of our search for a new Rector we would like to thank those who help in any way to keep St. Mary's a vibrant welcoming, worshipping community.

Please keep us and our church in your prayers as we search for a new incumbent. Please make the effort to attend the APCM on Sunday 21st April after the morning service to show us your support.

This meeting is for everyone who is on the Electoral role. Would you consider being a member of the PCC, or one of the sub committees, to help in the decision making for the future of the parish?

Would you help us by going on rotas:- Mary's place, the Baptism team, Sides persons and welcomers, who all provide a friendly face to visitors in the church.

**WE ARE REACHING OUT TO YOU ALL** for your help and support during this time. Please consider if you can help in any way.

Thank you,

*Joan Porteous & Ann Wilson.*

*Churchwardens of St Mary's Parish Church*

## **A Treasurer is urgently needed for St Marys Centre**

The committee is desperate to find a new treasurer to replace Malcolm Graham, who tendered his resignation to the Committee 18 months ago....

### **A Volunteer is required for the role of Parish Centre Treasurer**

**The Buildings and Hall Management Committee are looking for a new Treasurer, able to look after the Committee's Finances.**

**The Committee meets about six times in the year and is answerable to the PCC. The volunteer is responsible for preparing, managing and publishing the quarterly Accounts, paying the bills and banking all income received from the Parish Centre Hall Users.**

**If you know of anyone who might be interested in this position, please contact the Committee Chairman Brian Wilson or the Church Wardens, Joan Porteous (tel: 4885344) and Ann Wilson (tel: 4824400)**

## **Tony & Jacqui Hewison have shared this wonderful account of their HOLIDAY IN INDIA 2**

Last year we went on holiday to South Africa and before going we had to have so many injections at £70 a go, that Jacqui being so practicable, said that as they protect us for two years where else can we go in that time. So that is where India came into the frame.

Before we went, we decided to do a bit of research and spoke to a few people who had already been there and we listened to their advice, in particular: don't eat meat; have nothing to drink with ice cubes; any food that has been washed; take plenty of warm clothes, and keep your eyes closed if you're a passenger in a car, driven by a local.

So, with a little bit of trepidation, we chose a tour that would take us to the Golden Triangle, and then to Shimla in the foothills of the Himalayas. If you've ever watched a film called 'Trains, Planes and Automobiles', well welcome to our article, 'Planes, Coaches, Rickshaw, Tuuk Tuuk, Safari Truck, Land Rover, Camel Cart, Train, then a Toy Train, but more of these later. What an adventure it turned out to be!

Arriving in New Delhi was an experience. The freezing smog that greeted us meant that we couldn't see the runway until we were almost on top of it, and landing within seconds. Where were the blue skies and sun we were expecting? First thing that we needed to do was get out all our warm clothing and pack away our shorts, tea shirts, and suncream. The second thing we noticed once we had cleared the airport was the noise. Horns from the traffic sounding almost nonstop and as for the traffic itself. It seemed to us to be organised chaos. Push bikes, rick shaws, tuuk tuuks, cars, buses, coaches and scooters. You name it, all types vying for position on the road. Pedestrians, camels, cows and dogs seemed oblivious, wandering into the road without a thought. As for roundabouts, everyone seemed to think they had right of way - causing more mayhem. However, we did eventually get to our hotel.

Locals seem to regard lane markings, and zebra crossings as for decoration purposes only, especially the traffic lights, where at main junctions they seemed to be completely ignored, and it was left to a local police officer to bravely direct the traffic.

The bustling city of New Delhi had some impressive buildings including the Parliament building, the Qutub Minaret and the mosque Jama Masjid. We were taken to the Gandhi Museum in the centre of the city which was very moving. There, amongst the details of his life, was a rundown of his last day and cemented footsteps tracing his last walk to the point of his death. A memorial is now in place over the spot where he was fatally shot.

On a lighter note, the following day we had a rickshaw ride through the narrow streets of Old Delhi. It was like a dodgem ride at Alton Towers, trying to avoid the pedestrians, scooters, vans, cows, dogs all going in different directions. The poor man peddling our rickshaw was reduced, on a few occasions, to having to get off and push to get us going again. Remind us not to eat so many pies next time.

Our journey the following day took us to Agra, the home of the red fort and Taj Mahal. It was very misty and cold when we arrived at the Taj Mahal, which you could hardly make out in the distance. It was very peaceful and after a talk on the history of the memorial we were able to walk through the gardens to the central building and visit the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal, third and favourite wife of Shah Jahan. The architecture is amazing, the detail of the inlaid patterns in the marble superb. It's not surprising that it took 22 years and around 20,000 men to build the site.

The afternoon was spent at the red fort which is across the river from the Taj Mahal and where the Shah and his family had lived. It is called a fort but is more like a palace. It's built of red and white stones, reputedly the favourite colours of Shah Jahan. The Shah had the Taj Mahal built



across the river from the fort so that he could look out at it and mourn his dead wife. His son Aurangzeb thought that his father was spending too much money on its construction, so he did what any 'normal' ruler of the time would do. He murdered all his brother's and then had his father confined as a prisoner until his death, ruling in his father's place. At least his father was imprisoned in a part of the palace where every day, he could look at where his beloved wife lay. It is a sad story but one where love of the Shah Jahan shines through.

Our next stop was Ranthambore and the National Park. Early on the morning after our arrival we set off in safari vehicles to visit the Tiger reserve. Here was another bone rattling journey over very rutted paths and dips. Kangaroos had nothing on us as we catapulted out of our seats over each pothole. We very nearly ended up sitting on the lap of the person in front of us. Tonys step counter registered over 26,000 steps that day without him lifting a foot, it was all the jostling of the jeep ride. He's been bragging ever since about his record number of steps. Unfortunately, we did not see one tiger, they were obviously too shy and embarrassed to come out and meet us. We saw plenty of deer (tigers' dinner) monkeys, wart hogs and peacocks, but nothing striped!

Next stop Jaipur, the pink city and boy did it live up to its name. Most of the buildings in the city centre are pink, which is the Indian colour of hospitality. Here we visited the Astronomical Observatory and the City Palace which is home to the present Maharajah. In the evening, we were lucky to visit the home of Brigadier Amar Singh, which was used when filming the first of the BBC series the Real Marigold Hotel.

It was here that we experienced the Tuck Tuck. Ours made so much noise that we wondered if we would actually survive the journey, In, anticipation of what might happen, Tony apologised in advance to Kirsten who was sitting opposite to him, for what might happen if, as we anticipated, we stopped sharply. We were told later that just after we got off, one of the wheels did indeed fall off. In our defence we don't believe it was anything to do with how much we were eating.

The brigadier himself showed us around his home and gave us an insight into some of the goings on which occurred during the filming. Apparently, Miriam Margolyes would only sleep in a room on the ground floor and when Rosemary Shrager came down to see her on the first day, she sat on the bed next to Miriam and the bed collapsed under their combined weight! Wayne Sleep and Roy Walker sat up late into the early hours of the morning on the first couple of nights and the Brigadier had to say that it was unfair on his staff to stay up this late and then have to go home. So, they came to an arrangement that Wayne and the others would say in advance what they wanted to drink, and the staff would lay it out for them to help themselves. After viewing the house, we were taken up the roof top and given snacks and drinks whilst watching the sun

go down and the kites flying in the sky, (Kite flying is very popular in India and January is when they have a kite festival to mark the transition from of the sun and marks the end of winter.

From the roof top we could see in the distance the Amber fort which we were to visit the following day. Which is where the Land Rover came in, Coaches are not allowed near the fort, so we got there so we arrived there in a convoy of them. An opulent palace, constructed of red sandstone and marble was laid out on 4 levels, each with a courtyard. One Raja, Man Singh had 12 wives and had 12 rooms built for them, one for each Queen. Each room had a staircase leading to the Kings room, but the Queens were not allowed to ascend these stairs to get to his room!! As well as the marvellous architecture and stonework to admire, there were a group of elephants which you could ride on if you so wished. They were beautifully decorated with attractive saddlery. It was here that we learnt that the Indian government is trying to improve the lives of animals in the country. The elephants were only permitted to work for a limited number of hours in the morning before it got too hot, and they have to be allowed a 3-week holiday per year in a special sanctuary. Next instalment in May.....keep looking!



## ***23rd April: St George, our Patron Saint who isn't English***

The English have a patron saint who isn't English, about whom next to nothing is known for sure, and who, just possibly, may not have existed at all. But that didn't stop St George being patriotically invoked in many battles, notably at Agincourt and in the Crusades, and of course it is his cross that adorns the flags of English football fans to this day.

It's most likely that St George was a soldier, a Christian who was martyred for his faith somewhere in Palestine, possibly at Lydda, in the early fourth century. At some point in the early centuries of the Church he became associated with wider military concerns, being regarded as the patron saint of the Byzantine armies. There is no doubt that St George was held as an example of the 'godly soldier', one who served Christ as bravely and truly as he served his king and country.

The story of George and the dragon is of much later date and no one seems to know where it comes from. By the Middle Ages, when George was being honoured in stained glass, the dragon had become an invaluable and invariable visual element, so that for most people the two are inseparable. Pub signs have a lot to answer for here: 'The George and Dragon'.

However, it's probably more profitable to concentrate on his role as a man who witnessed to his faith in the difficult setting of military service, and in the end was martyred for his faithfulness to Christ.

The idea of the 'Christian soldier' was, of course, much loved by the Victorian hymn-writers - 'Onward, Christian soldiers!' The soldier needs discipline. The heart of his commitment is to obedience. The battle cannot be avoided nor the enemy appeased. He marches and fights alongside others, and he is loyal to his comrades. In the end, if the battle is won, he receives the garlands of victory, the final reward of those who overcome evil.

St George's Day presents a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is to distance the message of his life from the militarism and triumphalism that can easily attach itself to anything connected to soldiers and fighting. The opportunity is to celebrate the ideal of the 'Christian soldier' - one who submits to discipline, sets out to obey God truly, does not avoid the inevitable battle with all that is unjust, wrong and hateful in our world, and marches alongside others fighting the same noble cause.

Discipline, obedience, courage, fellowship and loyalty - they're not the most popular virtues today, but that doesn't mean that they don't deserve our admiration.





## ***'GLORIOUS THE SONG WHEN GOD'S THE THEME': ALLEGRI'S MISERERE***

In the 1980s thanks to Godfrey Smith, a columnist for The Sunday Times, there was a series of letters about particular pieces of music that have the TQ – the Tingle Quotient. As we listen, the music sends a shiver of excitement up and down the spine and opens out for us a new world of beauty and wonder.

The letters started with a novelist writing about his travels across the Sahara. In moments of desolation and loneliness he would think of music that meant the most to him and which he thought he might never hear again. Then a schoolmaster in Rochester wrote of a production of 'Romeo and Juliet' where the funeral scene virtually brought the house down. Juliet entered a darkened school hall, lit only by glimmering candles with music sung that brought the audience to tears.

For both novelist and schoolmaster, the work that had that TQ factor was Allegri's Miserere. It provided consolation in the cold desert nights, and it created the impact in that production of Shakespeare's play. Other readers supplied their list of TQ music, and always the Miserere was in the top five. I suspect that this music strikes the TQ for many of you as well.

Why is it, I wonder? We can provide an answer by talking of the contrast between the plainsong sung by the men's voices and the responses from the choir that lead to that small group of solo voices where the treble or soprano reaches a high C and comes down the scale to the cadence. We can point to the intriguing history of this work for the setting by Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652) was the exclusive possession of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. To copy the music was a crime punishable by excommunication.



## SMILE LINES



Some children were asked: “What do you think of Jesus?”

“Jesus,” said one little boy, “is the best photograph God ever had taken.”

**Worry** I have so many problems that if a new one comes along today, it will be at least two weeks before I can worry about it.

### **Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road? (Theological Version)**

- Billy Graham: The chicken was surrendering all.
- Rick Warren: The chicken was purpose driven.
- John Wesley: The chicken’s heart was strangely warmed.
- John Piper: God decreed the event to maximize his glory. OR . . . it was an act of Christian hedonism. The chicken realized that his greatest joy would only be found on the other side.
- C.S. Lewis: If a chicken finds itself with a desire that nothing on this side can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that it was created for the other side.
- N.T. Wright: This act of the chicken, which would be unthinkable in British barnyards, reeks of that American individualism that is destructive to community.
- Pluralist: The chicken took one of many equally valid roads.
- Universalist: All chickens cross the road.
- Tim LaHaye: The chicken didn’t want to be left behind.
- Emergent: For this chicken, it’s not the destination that’s important. It’s the journey itself.

**Wages** ‘Despite inflation, the wages of sin remain the same.’

**Who?!** Whenever I see a little church, I always pay a visit. So when at last I’m carried in, the Lord won’t ask ‘Who is it?’

### ***Seen in a parish magazine . . .***

**Heaven** “We shall be meeting on Wednesday, when the subject will be ‘Heaven - how do we get there?’ Transport by bus is available at 6.45pm opposite the King’s Arms.

**Choir** ‘Next Sunday the choir will give a recital, after which the church will be closed for repairs.’

“The restoration of the churchyard was finally completed by the resurfacing of our driveway. The following Sunday, the church wardens praised everyone who had helped, and gave special thanks to the vicar and his wife who had rolled in the gravel.

**Who is he?** A musical concert was about to be performed in a prison. The Governor was talking to a titled lady guest, explaining that the orchestra was made up of murderers, embezzlers and other hardened criminals. The lady then pointed to a man in the corner, holding a trombone. “He looks a tough customer,” she whispered. “Whatever has HE done?” The Governor paused and smiled. “Ah, actually, he is the chaplain.”

**Do it** Here's a sure-fire way to cross off every item on your To-Do list: Do the chores first, then write them down and then cross them off!

**What am I?** I'm not old. I woke up, I lifted my arms, I moved my knees, I turned my neck. Everything made the same noise: Crrrrraaaaaacccccckkkk! So I've come to the conclusion that I'm not old, I'm crispy!

**Running** Insanity runs in some families; in others it positively gallops.

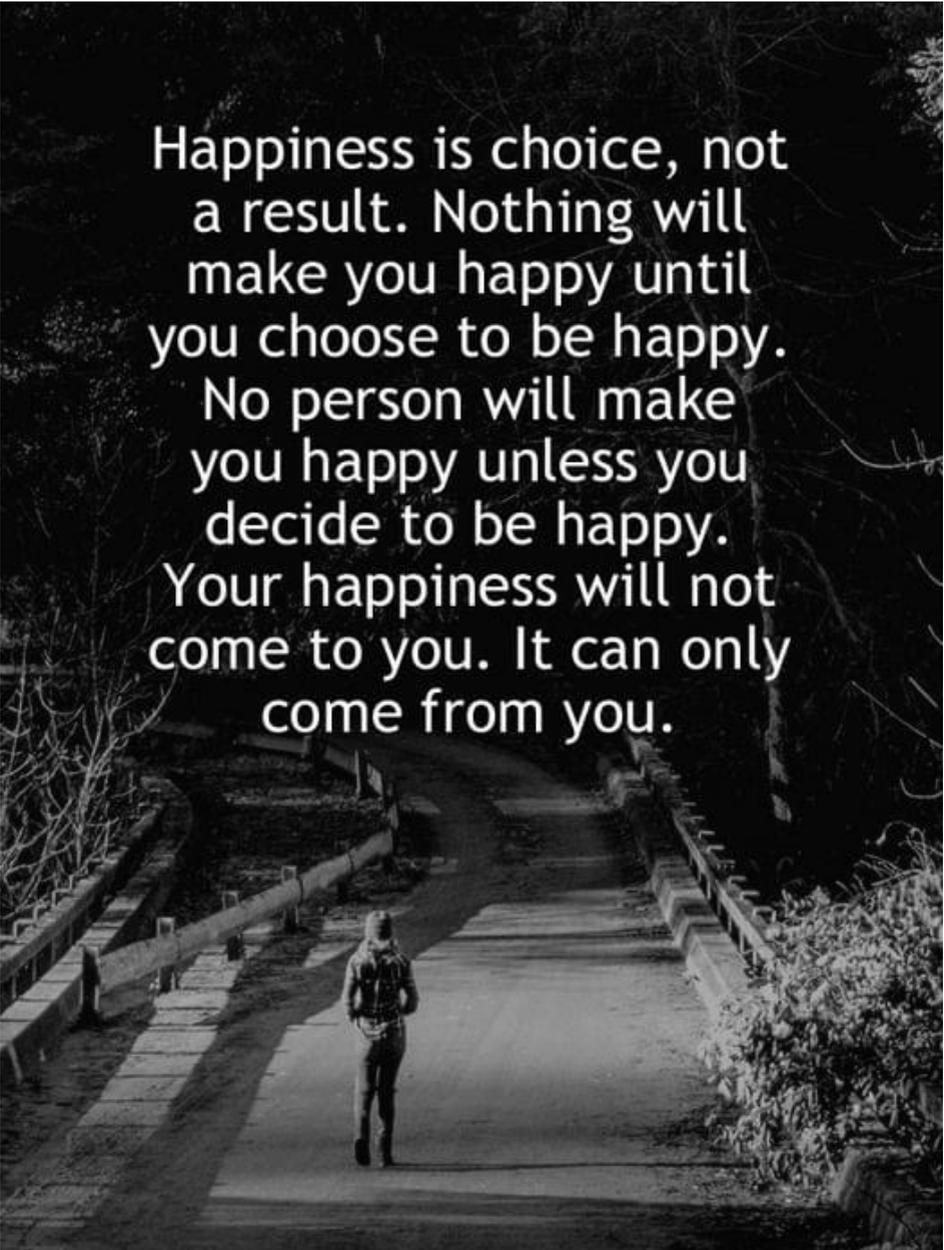
**Up or down?** Is this apisdn umop or am I just standing on my head?

**Rolled**

**The 5th commandment** In reply to a question in Sunday school, one little boy said that the fifth commandment is: ‘Humour thy father and thy mother.’

**Long prayer** A friend took her small daughter to church. The vicar’s prayer had gone on for several minutes when suddenly a small voice piped up: “Has he forgotten how to say Amen?”





Happiness is choice, not  
a result. Nothing will  
make you happy until  
you choose to be happy.  
No person will make  
you happy unless you  
decide to be happy.  
Your happiness will not  
come to you. It can only  
come from you.

[MyPositiveOutlooks.com](http://MyPositiveOutlooks.com)

## Holy Baptisms

9 March	Freya Iris and Ezekiel Levi Harrison	Whickham
23 March	Noah Christopher Alger	Sunniside

*"May he grow in the faith into which they have been baptised and come to confirmation"*

## With the Easter season in mind...

Of all the things that will surprise us in the Resurrection morning, this I believe, will surprise us most: that we did not love Christ more before we died. – J C Ryle

The Resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon reported in the Acts. The Resurrection, and its consequences were the 'gospel' or good news which the Christians brought; what we call the 'gospels'... were composed later....The miracle of the Resurrection, and the theology of that miracle, comes first: the biography comes later as a comment on it. – CS Lewis in 'Miracles'.

God fits our souls here to possess a glorious body after; and He will fit the body for a glorious soul. – R Sibbes

Man's way leads to a hopeless end – God's way leads to an endless hope. – Anon

Jesus can be contacted 24 hours a day: just go on-line via your knee-mail. – Anon

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Grief is the reminder  
that love was present,  
and that even if it's no  
longer in its original form,  
that love still exists.

—MICHELLE MAROS