

# TRINITY NEWS

WEEK 16.  
April 16, 2023

When we read the Gospels it is hard to dismiss the consistent echo of disorientation and surprise concerning the resurrection. A chronicle of Easter Day would be a hopeless enterprise. Perhaps all we can recover across the centuries is the piercing not of shock; and that says a great deal.

Even in the Gospel, one thing is never described. There is a central silence, not broken until the second century, about the *event* of resurrection. Even Matthew, with his elaborate mythological scenery, leaves us with the strange impression that the stone is rolled away from a tomb that is empty. Jesus is not released by an angel (like Luke's Peter in Acts), but raised by the Father. It is an event which is not describable, because it is precisely there that there occurs the transfiguring expansion of Jesus' humanity which is the heart of the resurrection encounters. It is an event on the frontier of any possible language, because it is the moment in which our speech is both left behind and opened to new possibilities. It is as indescribable as the process of imaginative fusion which produces any metaphor; and the evangelists withdraw, as well they might.

Jesus' life is historical, describable; the encounters with Jesus risen are historical and (after a fashion) describable, with whatever ambiguities and unclarity. But there is a sense in which the *raising* of Jesus, the hinge between these two histories, the act which brings the latter out of the former, does not and cannot belong to history: it is not an event, with a before and after, occupying a determinate bit of time between Friday and Sunday. God's act in uniting Jesus' life with his eludes us: we can speak of it only as the necessary condition for our living as we live. And as a divine act it cannot be tied to place and time in a simple way. It is, indeed, an 'eternal' act: it is an aspect of the eternal will by which God determines how he shall be, his will to be the Father of the Son. These are abstract words, they describe nothing. They can only point to the truth that God's being and will are always and necessarily *prior* to ours. The event of resurrection, then, cannot but be hidden in God's eternal act, his eternal being himself; however early we run to the tomb, God has been there ahead of us. Once again, he decisively evades our grasp, our definition and our projection.

-Rowan Williams

## **Psalm 118:19-24**

***Response: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endureth forever.***

Open me the gates of righteousness, \* that I may go into them, and give thanks unto the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD, \* the righteous shall enter into it.

***Response: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endureth forever.***

I will thank thee; for thou hast heard me, \* and art become my salvation. The same stone which the builders refused, \* is become the head-stone in the corner.

***Response: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endureth forever.***

This is the LORD'S doing, \* and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; \* we will rejoice and be glad in it.

***Response: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endureth forever.***

### **SAINTS:**

**Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury, 19 April, Martyr.** Alphege became a monk at Deerhurst near Gloucester and withdrew in later life to be a hermit in Somerset. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan, drew him back to be Abbot of Bath and, in 984, Bishop of Winchester. In 1005 he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, where his austere life and lavish almsgiving made him a revered and much-loved man. In the year 1011, the Danes overran south-east England, taking Alphege prisoner. They put the enormous ransom of £3000 on his head, but Alphege refused to pay it and forbade anyone from doing so, knowing that it would impoverish the ordinary people even more. He was brutally murdered by his captors at Greenwich on this day in the year 1012.

**Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, 21 April, Teacher of the Faith.** Anselm was born in Aosta, northern Italy, in 1033. As a young man, he left home and travelled north, visiting many monasteries and other centres of learning. One such visit was to the abbey of Bec, where he met Lanfranc who advised him to embrace monastic life. Anselm had a powerful and original mind and, during his 34 years at Bec (as monk, prior and finally abbot), he taught many others and wrote theological, philosophical and devotional works. When Lanfranc died Anselm was made Archbishop of Canterbury and had to subordinate his scholarly work to the needs of the diocese and nation. Twice he endured exile for championing the rights of the Church against the authority of the king; but despite his stubbornness, intellectual rigour, and personal austerity he was admired by the Norman nobility as well as loved by his monks. He died in 1109.