



The Diocese of
Southwark

The Rectory
233 Court Road
Mottingham
London SE9 4TQ

020 8851 1909 direct line
standrewsmottingham@tiscali.co.uk

Rector: Revd. Ian Welch, M.A, B.Th.

The Parish of
St Andrew
with
St Alban
Mottingham

RECTOR'S PASTORAL LETTER, HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2021

Dear Friends,

The holy Season of Easter is nearly upon us, as we mark the anniversary of the first lockdown, and reflect on the trauma, challenge and lessons that the last 12 months have brought. These have been unprecedented times for all of us, with the death toll from Covid 19 now standing at more than three times the number who lost their lives in the last great national trauma – the blitz of 1940-1941.

This is a very sobering statistic, and one that calls, more than ever before in our life times, for the counter-balance of the hopeful Christian message of Jesus Christ's Resurrection: the message that out of bleak despair and death God can create a hope and glorious gift of life beyond our imagining!

In truth, the spiritual reality of the Resurrection transcends our everyday thinking. We can, however, sometimes catch glimpses of the spiritual evolution God intends for us in the world of nature: for example, in the magical metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly. In order for the glorious form of a butterfly to be born from the chrysalis, the caterpillar has effectively to decompose in the chrysalis. The broken down cells of the caterpillar contain 'imaginal cells' (that is, cells that carry the image or blueprint of the butterfly). These 'picture' cells join together, and form the new body of the butterfly, which, at a certain point, struggles free from the chrysalis to become a glorious "flying flower"! What a miraculous transformation! This image of the butterfly is always held within the DNA and cells of the caterpillar, which is born to fly!

The parallels with Christ's death and resurrection are striking: that out of the chaos of pain and death, a new glorious life bursts free. More than this, faith tells us that those who turn to Christ are promised a share in his resurrection nature as the ultimate goal of our spiritual evolution. We may indeed find ourselves face to face with the forces of chaos and death (very evident in recent months), but in Christ, our hope is well founded and points to something truly wonderful. He is effectively the 'imaginal cell' who holds the blueprint for a transformed humanity. This is the hopeful and joyous message we share at Easter-tide: that in Christ we are transformed into glory; that like the caterpillar, we are born to fly!

Wishing you and your loved ones a holy, blessed and joyous Easter!

Ian

Revd Ian Welch