

# Distant but United

## St Martin's Parish Church



## Passion Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March



“Recently I’ve found it difficult to remember the day of the week - the rhythms of life have collapsed as the restrictions on ‘normal life’ are tightened.

The church calendar can give us some anchorage in these choppy waters, reminding us of the deeper history through which we wade. This Sunday is Passion Sunday, a time when our focus as a Church is drawn inexorably to the suffering final journey of Jesus towards the waiting Cross. Whilst we cannot gather to ‘abide and remember’ together, it may help us in the trauma of this current crisis to remember that Christ has felt the way we feel, and that he abides with us, even now.

This week I have had to take the heart-breaking decision to close the church. I do so in the firm and certain conviction that it is for the common good. That, in closing the church, we are remembering our duty to safeguard all people and choosing to abide with them even in their suffering.

The building is closed, but the Church remains; it is the people of God who are praying, loving, listening and caring in our Community. That is the church we need now.

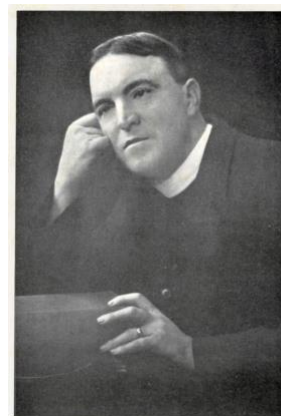
When such difficult decisions must be made, we must anchor ourselves in that deeper truth of ‘compassion’, which literally means ‘suffer with.’ Jesus with us. Us with Jesus. The world is suffering; yet we have a hope.” *Rev Jonny*

## Lessons from the Past

Canon John Russell-Wilford was Acting Rector in St Martin's during the Occupation. He wrote beautifully of his ministry in this Parish in those tremendously difficult years, and his words were recently found and re-printed by Rev Martin Dryden of St Clement's.

Last week, Martin and I recorded Russell-Wilford's memoirs for a series of radio dramatisations on BBC Jersey. They begin with a two-part interview this Sunday morning at 07.20 and 08.20, followed by six episodes every Sunday thereafter.

The hope had been that they would form a central part of the BBC's coverage of Liberation 75 - and that is still true. But I think in these days where confusion and fear threaten to overwhelm our sense of self, the wisdom and faithful reflections of Canon Russell-Wilford will speak to us in another hour of need.



*Canon Russell-Wilford*

## Parish 'Telephone-Tree'

Our Telephone-Tree ensures that over 50 of our older church members are kept in regular contact. They are sharing updates, having a chat, and listening out for those in need. The Parish Hall are now coordinating volunteers to help meet the needs of those most isolated. If you know of someone who may be missing out on this service, please let the Rector know ASAP.



## Giving Thanks for Frontline Workers

On Thursday evening at 8pm, you may have heard the church bells ringing, and clapping from doorways and windows. Together we made a great noise in recognition of the thousands of medics, care-workers and emergency personnel who are dedicating themselves to fighting this virus, often at great risk to themselves.

When the 'All-Clear' is sounded, we will ring the bells again and again as we call the community out to gather again. I have great hope for that day.

## Continuing in Prayer

To guide you in your prayers, I have attached an order of service for Compline - Night Prayer. These words have been said or sung for centuries at the end of each day by Christians seeking to deepen their relationship with God before they sleep. In these anxious times, I hope you find solace and peace in these prayers.

Also, the Dean is encouraging those of every faith across the Channel Islands to pray about the COVID-19 crisis this Sunday. Details are on the weekly prayer sheet.



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