

Too Late to Color the Easter Egg?

Dear People of St Bede's,

I need touch to be in touch with you! I've been sent by Bishop Greg Rickel to serve your needs in this challenging year, but I can't just hover like a drone over the congregation. I am grateful for the members with whom I have been able to connect through phone calls, and I am learning a lot about the ways people understand and appreciate the strengths of St Bede's Church. I have been impressed with the leadership and willingness to serve, no matter what, of the wardens and bishop committee members, Kathleen our parish administrator, and Joe our treasurer, our deacon Hillary and pastoral intern Chuck.

Now I'm thinking about YOU, the members I have not yet met. I know many of you have worshipped on Sundays and weekdays by *ZOOM*, *Facebook*, and *Duo*: Sunday Eucharist online, Compline, Coffee Hours, and Bible Study. I know that more of you have participated that way than we have had at church on a weekly basis for some time. We'll keep working on our alternative ways of **Being St Bede**.

You have also continued to encourage one another, especially those in any kind of discomfort. You still feed those with bare pantries, shop for those who can't get out, and pray for those with drooping spirits. You fulfill as best you can your pledges of support for the Congregation. YOU are, then, still THE CHURCH.

While we try to learn patience, as we protect one another and our neighbors by social distancing, you may think of ways to make that easier. I will be watching the Vicar's email, bedesvicar@gmail.com, for anyone who wants me to give them a call any for reason, big or small. I continue to phone random batches of parishioners, but am always happy to contact someone you refer to me.

With this Easter Egg letter, I intend to start a more regular way of sharing, things with no policy implications or official pronouncements, but inviting comment and hopefully stimulating a kind of communal meditation on life. Watch for **Interim Sharings** regularly.

Too Late to Color the Easter Egg?

I began to collect Easter Eggs in 1971, beginning with some done in the Ukrainian tradition, or Pysanky. Here is what I learned then from my friend, their creator.



- She did not blow out the contents from the fresh eggs, but according to her tradition began painting them with ancient Christian symbols, and in rich colors, and then sealing them with a clear shellac from an ancient recipe. That is why my earliest eggs rattle when shaken: they still contain the egg contents, now dried and shrunken over the years. Remember, they are 50 years old.
- All the markings and colors have meanings. Violet ones, for example, with 40 little fields of green plants—the forty days of Lent; rich black and gold eggs—light emerging from darkness as the Easter Vigil begins; signs of nature and the cosmos—Easter is an event for all of Creation. I had a tiny robin's egg with a sea shell icon, which finally burst just a few years ago, designed to celebrate the baptism of a new family member at Easter.
- The oldest eggs are brought out into a place of honor alongside newer entrants every year, honoring our growth into the Christian life as we support new members of the Body of Christ.

But *Why Eggs?*

Early Christian Communities celebrated Pesach, the Jewish Passover, with a new meaning. Both festivals occurred as Spring was breaking out, and so the signs of new life were adopted as Easter symbols. The **Egg**, however, had a pride of place. Why? Watch a fertilized egg, warmed by the hen's nestling over it for days, and then allowed to begin a kind of dance. As it moves, we realize new life is within, struggling to live. A single peck through the shell begins an urgent grappling for air. There is no going back. Once there is a breakthrough, the choice is between drowning in the fluids within, or breaking completely out and becoming an individual creature on the earth. It is the **Broken Egg** that is the true symbol of Easter. The Tomb of Jesus, broken open with the rolling away of the Stone, witnesses to the New Life set free into the world. New Life, yes, but not with the old lifestyle of greed and self-aggrandizement. It is the Christ-Life of self-giving Love.

This aspect of the Easter Egg, this process in the life of the egg, this brokenness that has meaning, seems most expressive of our Easter Season 2020. There is still time to color your Easter Eggs, because the Dying and Rising of Jesus is still a prime motivator of our lives. Even the horror set loose by the virus will be tamed by the working out of the Resurrection. What we have held familiar and comforting has been disrupted, but Easter tells us, All will be Made New.

Brothers and Sisters, in new ways, our Church will Awaken. Our sense of relationship with one another will be brightened by the realization that we now also have new possibilities of relating, as Christians, with all our neighbors. We will not plan to conquer them. We will commit to loving them, with new fervor, with new freedom, with fewer rules for them, but with the rule of Love better understood by us.

The **Egg that is Broken**, like the **Bread Broken for You**, to which we will return around the altar when safety permits, are both symbols for us. We are being given the power to see the freedom of God's Love. Some things that we have lost will be restored to us. Other things will be exchanged for better signs of our unity, our tradition, our capacity for Love. God will adjust our vision to see what Christ, our Risen Savior, sees in us. And in our neighbors and in all Creation.

I just retrieved our Easter Eggs, new and old, from the garage. Easter Continues!

Let's be more deeply in touch.

Joseph, priest