

# St Michael and All Angels

*Serving the community of West Andover*

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## *Is the Parish Priest Being Bossy?*



As we enter Holy Week, I am in my annual dilemma about how bossy I'm going to be about Holy Week. Illustrated by the fact that I have been with one congregation and not with others... !

Christianity is not about formulas - if you do this, good things will happen, you must do such and such, and you can't think this and that. Its not about formulas, it's about a relationship, a relationship between you and God, me and God. us and God.

And yet Christianity is a religion of obedience. Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (John 14.15) It is only in obedience to Jesus that we can discover the riches and depth of what God is offering us, most especially through Holy Week. (Please Note - this total obedience is to Jesus, NOT to church leaders!)

For me, the most valuable thing that you and I can do is not about the rules, nor about formulas; it is about encounter with God. If I could enable nothing else to happen, it would be for each of us to encounter God. Because it is in this encounter that our lives are fulfilled, we find direction, we pet a sense of Jesus has in store for us. Just like the disciples we want to know more, but just like them we are nervous of what that might mean, and Jesus knows that. Remember Jesus words to John the Baptist's disciples as they come to find out, "Come and see." Those words are for us as well. Not that I as parish priest should teach you the "rules of Christianity" but that each of us would make the space to encounter Jesus and to hear his call, to hear him say again and again, "Come and see." (John 1.39)

Many events are organised at St Michael's; they are not to be about rules, they are to create space for encounter, with each other and with God. We want to create the opportunity for people to meet and to discover, we want to enable people to discover God in their daily lives, through learning to pray and reading the bible with understanding; to meet God in worship and in care for others.

So where does my plea that everyone keep Holy Week come from? Simply, that in this week, above all others, we do not just hear the story, but we enter into, we experience the story of that first holy week; marking the footsteps of Jesus with our own footsteps, following the women and the men who had courage to stand by him at the cross, who waited in the desolation of the Saturday, who dared to be lost in the confusion of that first Easter Day, and to discover the joy of Christ Risen and a whole New world begun!



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Brothers and sisters, I urge you, above anything else, make time to encounter God. Make space to learn and to grow. For Jesus promises.. ."You will see far greater things than these." (John 1.50)

*Chris*

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