

Twitter. The social media app, not the bird way of telling your neighbour where to get off. If you haven't discovered Twitter, my advice would be to keep your innocence at all costs. Not that anyone ever listens to advice from this pulpit. But, hey.

I'm not going to try and explain Twitter- it is after all largely inexplicable- but one of the principal outcomes of being pulled down into its many vortices is that it's very easy, with Twitter, for your fellow humans to communicate to you what's going on in their heads. Very often this is not pleasant. Once heard, never forgotten. If it's politics people are Twittering about the effect is something akin to waking up in a Hieronymous Bosch painting. If it's a culture war topic, paint the windows white, grab any tinned food you can and hide under the table till there's nobody left standing. There are various sub-sets of Twitter- lefty twitter, gay twitter for example, and even Christian twitter which is not by any means immune from controversy and frequently sets the fire alarms off thanks to the alternating smoke of roasting heretics and burning martyrs. There's even an Anglican twitter which- got to the point now- was last week contemplating the Ascension and, after pronouncing anathema on keeping it on Sunday instead of Thursday (consider us castigated by our peers), featured many voices decrying how they couldn't see the point of the Ascension and how silly the festival was and how Jesus had never left us (careful, could be a heresy alert coming!) and how Pentecost was much better. I didn't engage- I've made that mistake before, once and once only- but I did fume to myself. Something along the lines of, 'What?' The Ascension, the crown of Christian the theology, the apotheosis of the faith, the place where the incarnation has been heading since Christmas is *silly?*

Now, let's be generous (you can tell we've left Twitter now) and say you should be forgiven for the down-on-the-Ascension views; indeed you should be forgiven for any views- no burning of heretics here please, all things can be forgiven. Most years, most churches, you'd never know there'd been an Ascension at all: it's usually on a Thursday and nobody but the Vicar goes to church on a Thursday and probably not even her and the first we know about the Ascension is when we're sat in church and it's 'The Sunday after Ascension.' So you probably haven't given it too much thought.

We do, quite rightly, see Easter as the climax of the Christian story- there's chocolate for one thing- and there's no denying it's the all-singing all-dancing big production number of the Gospel revue. But climactic though it is, Easter is not actually the denouement of the drama. For that, you have to wait till today. All those resurrection stories- the empty tomb, the upper room, the Emmaus road, the fish

breakfast, Mary Magdalene and the gardener- all the Easter gospels we have heard these past seven weeks, have been pointing to this day. Jesus rose from the dead. And then he rose into heaven. It's an absolutely vital part of the good news, not just a bit stuck on the end to explain why Jesus is not around now taking this service or joining us for coffee afterwards or living in Lambeth Palace.

What we celebrate today really is the happy heart of our faith, the warm glow of the gospel.

The Resurrection gives us our Christian hope of eternal life: the Ascension tells us where that life will be lived.

The incarnation tells us of God bringing holiness to humanity; the ascension tells us of God bringing humanity to heaven. The resurrected body of Christ sat at the right hand of God. We are the body of Christ: take some time to think through what follows. It's a whole other level of theological thinking.

How important is that? How great is that?

How very *not silly* is that?