

From the Canon Treasurer & Chapter's Representative on Friends' Council, Canon Robert Titley

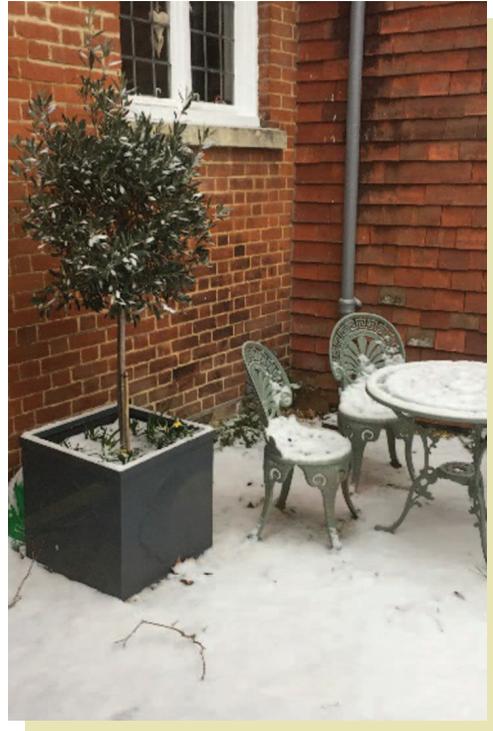
Words about words

I am writing this in the first full week of Lent, whereas you - if you are reading this promptly on the arrival of the Newsletter - are in the last days before Easter. Words are funny things: they don't mean something in the way that an Easter egg weighs something. Their meaning lies inert until the eyes of the reader or the ears of the hearer kiss them back into life. And as with Sleeping Beauty and Prince Charming, a lot can happen before that kiss of life comes.

So I wonder what has happened - to you, to me, to our world - between this chilly February evening when I am writing this and whenever it is when you are reading it. Words can so quickly be overtaken by events. More than ever, yesterday's hard-hitting front page may be fit only for today's chip paper.

What has this amateur literary theorising got to do with being a

Friend? Well, the Friends' Prayer asks God to 'give us grace' that our Cathedral 'may speak to every generation'. That sounds a tall order. When events move so quickly day to



day, what chance has a centuries-old building to speak in a world unimaginably different from the one its creators inhabited? What can it say about anything except a rich but dead past?

The prayer of the Friends is answered because the Cathedral points beyond itself to the Word made flesh, to the voice of God, embodied in Jesus, who speaks to us afresh in each moment. These verses from the Iona Community hymn (sing it to the tune 'Wild Mountain Thyme') are an invitation to hear that Word in whatever moment it is as you read this. It may be Maundy Thursday...

Quiet was Gethsemane,
camouflaging priest and soldier;
the most precious Word of Life
took the world's weight on his
shoulder,
for the good of us all.

And he's here when we call him,
bringing health, love and laughter
to life now and ever after,
for the good of us all.

or Good Friday...

On the hill of Calvary -
place to end all hope of living -
the most precious Word of Life
breathed his last and died
forgiving,
for the good of us all...

or Easter itself...

In a garden, just at dawn,
Near the grave of human violence,
The most precious Word of Life
Cleared his throat and ended
silence,
For the good of us all...

Thank you for your friendship towards
this place and its people. Have a
joyful Easter.



Snow in the Close, beginning of spring