

From the Father Bob Maguire website, April 2009

<http://www.fatherbob.com.au/>

Not just chocolate eggs

A friend of mine, known to disciples of the ABC and SBS (radio and TV), John Safran, sent this email today: "I'm in Jew Town (its real name) in Cochin, India. Cochin is where various Jewish communities or Jewmunities, have flowed in and out over the ages". John signs off: "Happy Pesach" (Passover).

So, here we are, in the deep south of Australia, reading, at 9.30am, an email sent barely 30 minutes ago, about Jews, Hindus and Muslims gathered, for better or worse, in the middle of one of our world's most ancient civilisation, India.

At this time of year, Easter, it helps a religious "mutt" like me, to receive such an email from such a person.

As a catholic priest of the Roman variety, it's helpful to be reminded of catholicism's own story.

Our ancestors were Jews. We need to be reassured that we, catholics, are spiritually Jews i.e. we're descendants spiritually, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, founding fathers, under God, of Judaism, as far back as 4000 BCE.

We'll do Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter and meaningful, spiritual expedition, as far as I'm concerned, helped or hindered by religion.

By that I mean, you can do the rituals either meaninglessly and mindlessly or vice versa i.e. meaningfully and mindfully.

Palm Sunday comes first. In house, the name's changed but we all call it Palm Sunday.

Whatever the ritual movements and words are, the meaning for both individual attendees and the collective must be clear and compelling.

Palm Sunday proclaims that religion as celebrity is spiritually toxic. Jesus' associates and most of his "fan club" pestered him to promote himself as the ONE who can save the day.

Historical details are interesting but take second place to "what does this mean for me and us?".

Jesus went along with the campaign but he put his own "spin" on it he rode a donkey, not a warhorse. To lead, you may well have to make a fool of yourself.

Holy Thursday, same thing. Ritual says "gather, tell nationalist story, sing songs, eat sacrificial lamb".

Jesus “spin”, allegedly preserved in the Holy Thursday Mass is Leader washes feet of associates to emphasise leader as public servant Leader promotes self-sacrifice as replacement ritual: “Take and eat/drink. This is myself”.

Good Friday, escalates the tension between the old version of God’s ways and the new version. Jesus, human and divine, stops the war between heaven and earth, as timelessly preached by “bad religion”.

No more killing of bodies/souls in the name of God.

Easter proves it’s not just a ritualised, pious hope.

Listen to the story. The grave’s empty. Better still, the women are endorsed as leadership material and the men associates are reassured and recommissioned as agents of the new way, resurrection.

When Jesus died he came back as you and me, not just chocolate eggs.

RJM