

**Chaplain's Assembly – Father Philip Murphy SSC**  
**4<sup>th</sup> September 2014**  
**“New Beginnings: - Groundhog Day”**

**Reading: Revelation 1:4-8**

Some of you may have seen the Bill Murray film “Groundhog Day”, although it is now some twenty-one years old, having been made in 1993.

In the film Murray plays a TV presenter visiting a small town to cover an event called “Groundhog Day”. While staying there, he finds himself in a time loop.

Every morning he wakes up at 6.00am, the radio plays exactly the same music, and every morning is the 2<sup>nd</sup> February. It is never the next day, it is never the 3<sup>rd</sup> February!

To begin with he takes advantage of the situation, stealing money, going out with as many different women as possible, driving dangerously and even being put into jail. But each morning he wakes up in his bed at 6am and the day starts again.

He then has a change of heart, and instead of being selfish each day, he starts to go out and help people, he learns a new language and how to play the piano and he saves lives.

The cycle is broken when he kisses the girl he really loves and the next morning it is the next day, the 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could go back, if we could relive our lives, repair the mistakes we make. It is an idea which is in so many different books, films and Television shows, going back in time, making changes and improving ourselves and everyone else.

But, of course, that is not the reality of life. We live in an ordered universe where time goes forwards. If we make a mistake today, we wake up tomorrow with the reality of the consequences of our actions.

In this morning's bible reading we hear the words of the Lord God saying “I am the Alpha and the Omega”. Alpha and Omega, as shown on the screen now, are the first and the last letters of the Greek Alphabet. It would be like saying “I am the A and the Z”. God is telling us that He is the beginning and the end, that all time belongs to Him and that He existed before time began and will exist after time finishes.

In fact He goes on to say that He is the God who is, who was, and who is to come.

A nice presentation on tenses for the English Department! God is now, the present, God was, the past, and God is to come, the future.

God knows that there is no going back for us, we cannot go back and change what we have done, good or bad. But God does give us the opportunity at starting each day fresh, and living a new life in Him.

We can see that most clearly in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. On that first Good Friday, Black Friday, Jesus was crucified and died for us on the cross. God did not go back in time to change what happened, but continued on, through Holy Saturday and into that first Easter Day, when Jesus rose to new life. Not the same life repeated, but a new life, a resurrected life. The risen Jesus still has the wounds of the nails in his hands and feet, but they have transformed from pain into glory. From death into life.

Yesterday in our hymn at Assembly we sang “New every morning is the love”. We sang in that hymn these words:

New mercies, each returning day,  
Hover around us while we pray;  
New perils past, new sins forgiven,  
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

In other words: each day gives us the chance to start afresh. We cannot go back and change the mistakes that we made yesterday, but we can restore things. We can ask for forgiveness. We can mend broken friendships and relationships.

In a few moments in our prayer this morning we will ask God that we may be taught to:

Live one day at a time  
so that we do not try to carry  
tomorrow’s troubles with today’s strength.

Likewise, may we do the best to deal with yesterday’s troubles and treat each new day, each new week, each new term and each new academic year as an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and to walk more closely with the God who loves and accepts us.