

Trinity 4 5th July 2020

5 th July Trinity 4	9.30 Family Communion	Zechariah 9 vv 9-12 p955 Romans 7 vv 15-25 p1134 Matthew 11 vv 16-29 p976	SoF Music we would have had 555 Thou Didst Leave Thy 379 Majesty 44 Blessed Assurance 50 Break Thou the Bread 559 To God Be the Glory
5 th July Trinity 4	11.00 Holy Communion	Zechariah 9 vv 9-12 p955 Romans 7 vv 15-25 p1134 Matthew 11 vv 16-29 p976	A&MR Music we would have had 191 (2 nd tune) Conquering Kings 349 Just as I am Psalm 145 199 Thou Art the Way 330 Thine For Ever 266 Thou Whose Almighty

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal: Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. *Amen.*

Matthew 11: 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

These verses from today's Gospel reading are the same verses as I chose for my Institution and Induction service in St John's Church when I first came to this parish in 1987. *Ye shall find rest for your souls.* This is Christ's offer to us. We who have taken Him up on this offer have His commission to extend His invitation to people in need of every kind. There is so much need in the world, there are so many people who need to be able to find rest for their souls. It is our commission, as Christians, to extend Christ's invitation to the whole world. We all have different opportunities to speak a word in season or to perform an act of kindness or to offer to serve our community in some other way, but, if we have found rest for our souls in Christ, it naturally follows, as night follows day, that we will share His peace with the world.

Today, we resume public worship at St Michael's and St John's, as so many other churches will be doing after the long lockdown imposed to try to prevent the spread of the COVID 19 virus. People have been through a lot in these hundred days of lockdown. It has been quite an experience for all of us. For some of us, like me, it hasn't been too bad. To be honest, I'm a little bit ashamed of enjoying what has in many ways been for me an extended holiday. I have been unable to do much of my work. That has been frustrating with regard to public worship and visiting people and enjoying the company of others, but there are some things, like meetings, which I'm not at all sorry to have missed. I have enjoyed preparing letters and sermons and study material to share online. To a degree, it has been possible to keep up with people by email and telephone and even post, not to mention meeting people out in the streets and in the countryside, some of whom I don't normally see very often. Lockdown in a nice house with a big garden on the margin of some of the most beautiful countryside in the world has been no hardship. Indeed, the beauty and wonder of nature have been more evident with the decline in traffic levels and the relative absence of aircraft in the sky.

For others, however, these days have been harsh. There are those who have caught the virus, some of whom have suffered badly and some have died. There are their anxious families and friends. Isolation has been very difficult for those in poor accommodation or forced to spend their time with violent or abusive family members or who are very lonely with few social contacts. It has not been easy for many having children off school and needing to be cared for, occupied, and (if possible) educated at home. The livelihoods and businesses of many have been lost or are under threat. NHS workers and carers in care homes have been working very long hours and risking their own well-being to care for the rest of us. So have many other

people performing necessary work such as keeping the shops open, driving and, of the highest importance, cleaning. The medical care required by people suffering from diseases other than COVID 19 has sometimes been lacking for understandable reasons. Then there are those in government who have to make very grave decisions, those who advise them, and those who have to enforce the regulations.

It has been a very difficult and worrying time for some people and, of course, we cannot say that it is over yet. The virus is still out there and it remains necessary to take precautions against catching or spreading it. We're still looking for treatments for those who have the condition and a vaccine which would protect us from infection. I'm praying that one way or another we shall be delivered from this plague.

So, what does our faith offer us? We have Christ's gift of rest for our souls. That means in this life as well as in the world to come. We can cast all our cares on Him in lives of prayer and know that He cares for us. We can trust Him even when we can't see where He is leading us. And we have that faith to share with other people in all their needs too. We can offer practical help. We can pray for them. Sensitively, we can share our faith with people, give them the reason for the hope which is in us.

The Lord does offer us rest for our souls in this life and, in the world to come, a peace so wonderful that it is beyond our understanding. When I feel frazzled, I'm very fond of the text, *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God*. That speaks of the world to come when all our troubles will be over and we shall be made like Him because we shall see Him face to face. God is Lord of earth and heaven. In that light, think again about what we are praying for in this week's collect.

There are times when we struggle with all this. God may seem far away and our faith weak. We feel we cannot live up to what we claim to believe. We are not able to act as we would want to act, living in the love of God, vessels through which the love of God may flow into the world. This is how St Paul felt as he wrote in today's epistle. What he found though was that he could trust God. Everything didn't depend on Paul. Everything depends on God. Everything doesn't depend on us. What we are called to do is to trust God for our lives and for the way we live them in the world.

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| <p>1. Lead, kindly Light, amid th'
encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far
from home,
Lead Thou me on;
Keep Thou my feet; I do not
ask to see
The distant scene; one step
enough for me.</p> | <p>2. I was not ever thus, nor prayed
that Thou
Shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my
path, but now
Lead Thou me on;
I loved the garish day, and
spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember
not past years.</p> | <p>3. So long Thy pow'r has blest
me, sure it still
Wilt lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag
and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel
faces smile,
Which I have loved long since,
and lost awhile.</p> |
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