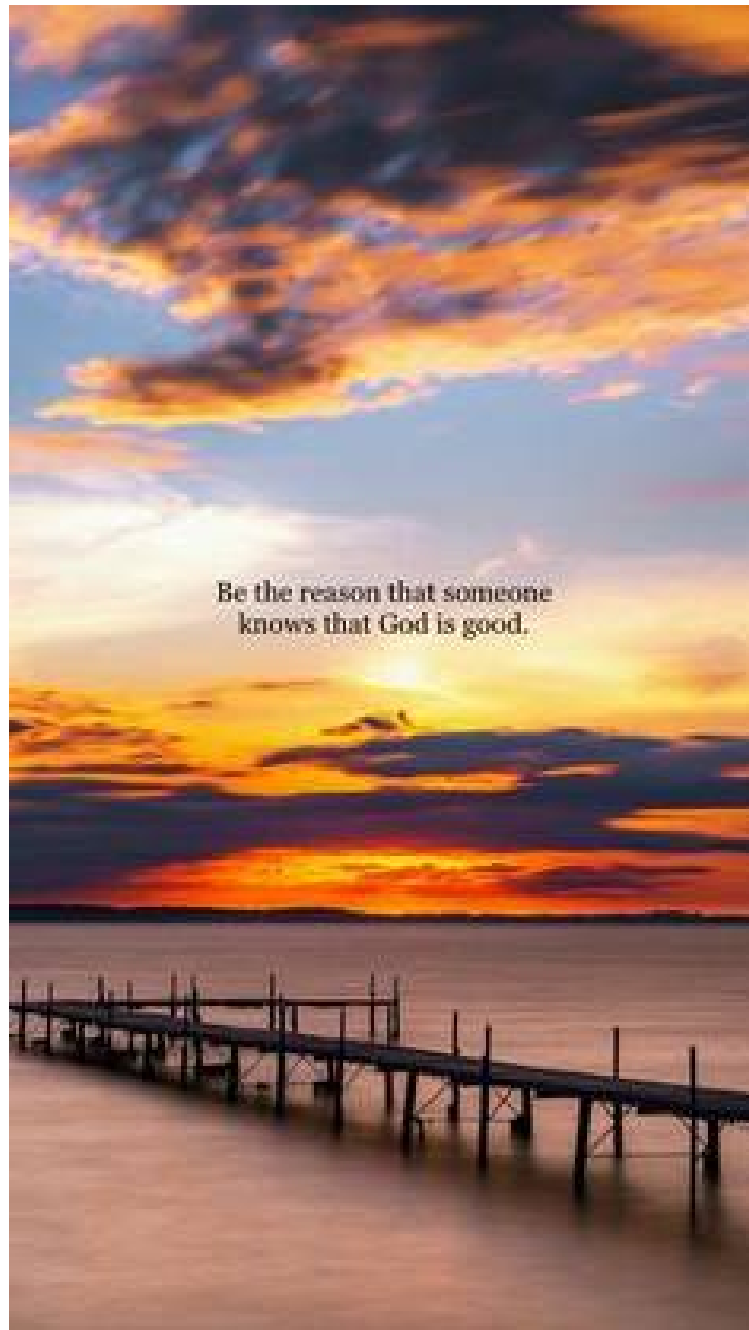


ROATH AND CATHAYS MINISTRY AREA
***News from St Edward's
& St Margaret's***



SUMMER 2022
Free but donations always welcome

Roath and Cathays Ministry Area (RCMA)

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Vicar	The Reverend Caroline Downs
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Reader:	Mr Geoff Smith Tel: 20499498.
Ministry Area Wardens:	Dr Heather Doe Mr Peter Lovitt
Ministry Area Treasurer:	Mr Jim Bendon Tel: 20482082
Ministry Area Secretary	Mrs Angela Parry MBE
Roath Church House bookings	RCH Booking Secretary Mrs Anna Mason Tel: 07720641653
Website:	www.roath.org.uk

The Clergy are always available to minister to the sick and dying. Please inform the clergy of sickness. Holy Communion may be received at home by those who are unable to come to church.

Confessions and the Sacrament of Healing by arrangement.

**Copy date for the next magazine (Michaelmas / Harvest)
is September 5th**

From the Ministry Area Leader the Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk

Farewell to Rev. Ruth

My dear Friends,

Those of you who have been in Church in recent weeks will have heard that the Reverend Ruth Coombs has come to the end of her three years Curacy with us. The Bishop of Llandaff has appointed her to a new post in the Garth Ministry Area and Ruth will shortly be licensed to this position.

We are enormously grateful for the work that Ruth has done voluntarily and graciously for us over the past three and a half years as Non Stipendiary Assistant Curate in the Parish of Roath and in recent months in the Roath and Cathays Ministry Area. It is however difficult to imagine a more challenging time to begin a period of Ordained Ministry. Ruth was ordained Deacon in 'normal' times and was getting to know us and becoming involved not only in services in our churches but in the wider activities of the parish, Deanery and Diocese. Then the Covid 19 pandemic struck and the world was changed for us all including in the life and work of the Church. For a time our buildings were closed and even when we reopened in August 2020 it was under heavy restrictions.

Nevertheless, life did go on and Ruth was ordained Priest by the Bishop at Llandaff Cathedral. However this was conducted under very limited circumstances. We were not able to gather in great numbers with parishioners and friends supporting her as would normally be the case. Nor were we able to have the usual celebrations attached to the Priest's First Eucharist in the parish. Notwithstanding all this Ruth continued faithfully and diligently in her ministry in the ways that were permitted.

As we stepped cautiously into the post pandemic era Ruth has been of especial value to the congregation at St Edward's which has been the principal focus of her ministry there she has been able to celebrate and preach regularly. . As a result not only those in Church could hear and see her but also via the medium of Zoom those at home were included in the worship. Ruth has also conducted Morning Prayer via Zoom on Saturday mornings which I know has been valued by those sharing in this time of devotion. We have all been able to share in her thoughtful and insightful sermons which have regularly been published and shared.

All her contribution to Roath has gone on alongside her important and demanding daily professional task as the Head of Wales in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. This work together with Ruth's former roles in the British Heart Foundation, Mind Cymru and as a Head-teacher have brought a depth of experience and a breadth of knowledge which has informed her preaching and pastoral care amongst us. This of course contributed to the impetus of creating our Ministry Area Diversity and Inclusion group. I am pleased to say that in her new ministry this will be continued and used not only locally but throughout the wider Diocesan community.

We thank Reverend Ruth most sincerely for all that she has done as priest and friend in her time here and wish her every blessing, success and good health in the next stage of her ministry in Gath



NEWS FROM THE Lychgate



Sally from June 2022

Sally reports that Pam Hall has been away on vacation in USA alongside her daughter Julie Smith and Son in-law Owen Smith and all are back home now safe. I hope they all had a lovely time and a well rested vacation and enjoyed their trip.

As from Sunday June 19th 2022 St Margaret's are now administering communion in both kinds bread and wine as all covid-19 restrictions are gone. Parishioners have the option to choose if they would like to receive both or just the Communion wafer.

Also from September 2022 St Margaret's will once again be serving coffee and biscuits after the 9:30am service. If you would like to be added to the rota then please let us know and it can be arranged.

On Saturday 18th June there was a wonderful musical tribute concert for our much missed friend and regular parishioner Teifion Griffiths, which was compiled & arranged by our organist Gary Mullins and was hosted by Rebecca John from BBC Cymru Wales. Also we thank all the singers and everyone else who played their part as well. It was a very emotional concert full of laughter and tears as Teifion was a truly great friend to each and everyone and very loyal to his family. It was very well attended and it was great to see so many people attending to remember this wonderful

man. Finally we want to pass on a very special thank you to Julia, Harriet and all the family for providing the light refreshments. RIP Teifion Griffiths, you will be greatly missed by all.

On Sunday 19th June at the 09:30am Service Paul and Jacs Rothwell had their baby daughter Beatrix Ann christened. It was a lovely service and Beatrix looked so radiant in her christening gown and the sun was shining to make the day even more special. It was a real honour and a privilege for myself (Sally) to be asked by the proud parents to present one of the godparents with the baptismal candle. After the service there was an open invitation to all to go over to Roath Church House for refreshments and also to meet Paul and Jacs's families and have an opportunity to have a photo taken with Beatrix.

As we are now Roath & Cathays ministry area there will be a party at Roath Church House on Friday 1st July 2022. There will be an Act of Worship service at 7pm in St Margaret's Church followed by refreshments, all are welcome.

That is all we have to report for now. We hope you all have a lovely summer.

Update August 2022

Pam back here with Sally, although the last article is a bit out of date, thought you would like to see it!

Birthday wishes go to Gill Day and Barbara Beavis who both celebrated their 80th birthdays recently. We also send congratulations and very good wishes to two couples from our congregation who recently married in St Margaret's –

Dan Cornick and Ruth Yardy in July and Craig Richards and Sharon Linsey in August.

Ladies Circle is still going strong, still meeting on the third Tuesday of the month at 1.30pm in Roath Church House, thanks to the organisers for keeping us entertained!

Dates for your diary:

Harvest this year will be celebrated on Sunday 24 September, a week earlier than usual.

The heritage weekend is on Saturday 17 September (1.30 – 5.30) and Sunday 18 September (2.00 – 5.30). Please support this.

St Margaret's Christmas Fayre – Saturday 26 November.



God bless
and until next time
Sally & Pam



Sandra Secombe

Eulogy given at her funeral at St Edward's Church on July 21st by her son Bruce

It was a little difficult to write this & make sure I do Mum proud but I've tried to add bits I think she would like. Mum wouldn't want this to be a sombre occasion and her sense of humour always was good.

A bit about Mums early life:

She grew up in Ealing West London. She has a brother Paul and sister Julie who is sadly no longer with us either, but I hope they are now reunited.

Mum was a quarter Scottish on her Dad's side - he worked in retail and was also a drummer in a Jazz band, which might explain Mums love for music and dancing.

Her Mum was a school dinner lady, which might also explain some of the meals she served up back in the 1980s.

Her paternal Grandmother worked in the Department store Selfridges in London and that became Mums career too which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Mum was always so smart and wanted us to be too - she used to groom us for school, brushing our hair until it felt like it was going to fall out. She would get annoyed if I scuffed my new school shoes - which I inevitably always managed to do on the first day of a new term.

Mum was always active in the Church community; my sister and I went to a C of E school & there was always something going on at the church hall and Mum did some flower arranging in her free time at the Church.

That was where she met our stepdad Fred who sadly passed away some years ago. They had a very happy marriage & I know that here at St Edwards Mum found a new lease of life

and made some wonderful new friends whom she always talked of so fondly. I was so pleased she had found something to fill the void of losing Fred because I was worried she may not. But she was so independent plus happy with the next chapter of her life she never gave any of us reason to worry, which is why her passing so suddenly was a shock for us all.

Mum was extremely organised, meaning we didn't have to plan this funeral as she had already done it! She took that burden from us which was one of the ways in which she cared.

As a friend she was committed and loyal everything she did was done with 100 percent devotion, from her role as a wife and grandmother, her attendance and activities at the Church - right through to Coronation Street which I don't think she missed an episode of in 50 years!

What I will say about her as a Mum was that she had this incredible ability of helping me, not so much in a traditional sense, but her way of caring was to be very practical & get me to accept any difficult situation I was in.

Her motto was - acceptance is key.

When I needed her she was never unavailable to me. If I ever felt anxious she could always calm me down and her practical, wise way of being so calming was, I would say, one of her best traits.

The last few weeks trying to make sense of things has made me realise how much I will miss her because I know she would very calmly tell me something quite simple to help me - but I can't go to her right now.

I think everyone knows their parents won't be around forever but nobody is prepared for how it will leave them feeling once they are gone. There is almost a child like vulnerability to it.

Right when I need Mum more than I ever have, she isn't here.

However it will make me a stronger man moving forwards to utilise the tools she did equip me with to cope, like her calmness and acceptance. I will also now give everything in life the same devotion she did - and I don't think a Mother could leave a more important legacy than her son wanting to become a better man.

I know she is at peace now and with Fred again which brings us all comfort as a family.

And I know she will continue to guide me from a higher place, which in itself is more powerful.

So thank you Mum for giving me life and always being there for me. And thank you for giving me a sister who then blessed me with two wonderful nephews Daniel and Isaac who I know you adored and they will miss you so much.

And now you are in a way giving me a chance to step up and be the man I should have always been - independent, strong, wise and hopefully with your generosity of spirit.

I'm now going to be the things I loved most about you.

I love you Mum.

Rest in Peace.

Thoughts for the Day

A selection of letters and Sermons from the Reverend Ruth Coombs

Thought for the Day (Easter Day) Luke 24.1 - 12

The gospel reading for Easter Day is really a story in four parts. It begins with some of the women that are close to Jesus coming to the tomb where his body has been laid to anoint it with oils and spices.

Jesus is dead and they want to pay their respects to him by following a customary ritual. A ritual that provides comfort to the mourner as well as showing regard for the loved one deceased. Death is an inevitable part of life, and the death of a leader and friend is devastating. Jesus' friends know he is dead and they expect him to stay dead. They set off to look for the dead amongst the dead. When they arrive at the tomb and it is empty and this doesn't bring them any clarity about Jesus, it brings them into confusion and worry. Has some wild animal carried him off, or worse has his body been stolen and taken away? It's hard to imagine what might be spinning through their minds. Those of us who have lost loved ones and laid them to rest know how important it is to get everything done properly. There is a calmness and a comfort in the ritual and pattern, and suddenly here it's all different.

Next the women receive a message, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen". The women encounter the resurrection through a message, through a third party. They do not see Jesus coming out of the tomb, God sends word through messengers. We can identify with this as we receive the message of the resurrection. Jesus doesn't come to us and stand before us on Easter morning, we hear the message, and what a message. A message that runs counter to our everyday experiences of life and death. A message that death is not the end, there is more to come.

The logical reaction to such a message is unbelief. We don't usually look for the living among the dead, nor do we look for the dead among the living, we have a sense of where each should be. When the women think about it, and what the messengers are saying, they remember what Jesus had said to them and so they go back to the apostles and tell them what has happened. This is met with the logical reaction. The men don't believe them. It's just too difficult to process and so they simply think it's an idle tale. They can't believe them. It would be simple to think that unbelief means that people believe nothing. This is not the case, it means that they believe something else. The apostles

believe that Jesus is dead and that is the end of the story. What the women are saying is counter to all that they know, so why would they believe them? Even the strongest people die. Experience tells us, and our modern world urges us, that life is finite and we must make the most of it while we can. We are bombarded with messages that 'life is too short' and encouraged to spend, spend, spend to make our lives more comfortable because 'you don't know what's around the corner'. The message of Jesus is that death is real but it's not the end. In Jesus life wins.

The apostles don't believe the message, but Peter is stirred by something. The message is so outrageous, what if it might be true, could it just be possible? He runs to the tomb and finds it empty, just as the women said. He too returns amazed.

A child recently commented, "People don't usually come back from being dead, so when Jesus did it was a miracle...therefore Easter is important because it's the day we celebrate miracles".

Those of us who gather together for worship on Easter Sunday follow in Peter's footsteps. We hear the message and we too dare to believe. The Easter story tells us that death is not the end, it turns the world upside down. It's an incredible message and we are compelled to believe it as God continues to challenge the certainty of death with the promise of life. He is risen indeed alleluia.

Thought for the Day (Easter 1) John 20:19-31 - Thomas

How many of us can say that we have never doubted anything. I think we can all laugh at the ultimate pessimist Victor Meldrew from One Foot in the Grave and his catchphrase "I don't believe it". We often find things difficult to believe, maybe because they are too awful, too outrageous, or too amazing.

We find it difficult to believe what is happening in Ukraine. We don't want to believe that humans can be so brutal and hurtful to others, even though we know it's happening. Those of us who haven't experienced such pain so find it difficult to comprehend.

And we are familiar with the phrase, "I couldn't believe my eyes" when witnessing something amazing, "I couldn't believe my eyes when I came home and Jeff had rebuilt the fireplace". Fans of reality television recognise the look that says, "I don't believe it" when the family come home after a few days away and their home has been transformed by an army of volunteers.

In our Gospel reading we don't know why the disciples are in the room. We can surmise that they are talking about Jesus, maybe praying, maybe having

some kind of service and we don't know why Thomas isn't there. The disciples are locked in because they are afraid, when Jesus appears. Perhaps their despair turns to unbelief when they first see him. He is at pains to show them his hands and side and then they rejoice.

The disciples tell Thomas that they have seen the Lord and he doesn't believe them. He says, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe". He hasn't seen it and it's in the 'too difficult to deal with' box.

Whatever his reasons for missing that assembly that day, Thomas misses out because he is not there. He misses the presence of the Lord, the power of the Lord, the peace of the Lord - that peace which we all seek and need, he misses the praises of the Lord.

Thomas misses a lot when he misses that assembly. Regardless of his excuse for not being there, he misses some things that can never be repeated. Others tell him about it, but Thomas learns the hard way that there are some things you just have to see for yourself.

Thomas' last memory of Jesus is of a dead man hanging on a cross. His world has crumbled around him and doesn't know what lies ahead. Little wonder that he finds this all very difficult to understand.

The next week Jesus appears again in the room and Thomas is there. Jesus tells him to put his fingers in his hands and his hand in his side, saying, "Do not doubt but believe". Thomas recognises Jesus as his Lord and God.

We don't know if Thomas actually touched Jesus' wounds, but there is an accepted assumption that he did. This moment has been captured in many works of art, and of course it has earned Thomas his nickname 'The Doubter'. But once Thomas saw Jesus and understood, he never doubted again.

When we think about it, Thomas only wanted what the other disciples had already had. As soon as he receives it he believes again, and his belief is unshakable.

I wonder what tone of voice Jesus uses when he tells Thomas to believe and then goes on to bless those who have not seen and yet believe. Is he admonishing Thomas for doubting, or is he encouraging him to believe? We don't know.

When I reflect on this moment it reminds me of what Jesus says in John chapter 8. Here, Jesus is in the Temple and the Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, quoting the law of Moses. Jesus says to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at

her". They slowly go away. Jesus asks her if she has been condemned by anyone, she hasn't. He says, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

We are neither without sin, nor without doubt. Rather than concentrating on Thomas and his doubt, maybe we can reflect on what Thomas does in response to his belief. Rather than cast the first stone maybe we can repent of our own doubts and believe more strongly. After all this is the same Thomas that in John chapter 11 when Jesus is going to raise Lazarus and Thomas knows that Jesus' enemies are after Him and that Jesus might just die; is willing to go with Jesus and die with him if necessary. Thomas also challenges the rest of the disciples to go along with Jesus.

After Pentecost, the Bible doesn't mention Thomas again. History, however, tells us what happened to the disciple called "Twin". Thomas travelled east, preaching the Gospel through Persia. He finally wound up in India where he had a very fruitful ministry. There are several churches in India today that can trace their history back to the time of Thomas. Eventually, nonbelievers took Thomas and killed him with a spear. He died for the Lord he said he would follow even to death when Jesus raised Lazarus.

Living where we do it is unlikely that we will be persecuted or killed for our faith. But we do experience difficult times, maybe the loss of a loved one, or illness in someone close to us. The pandemic has shaken many people and we remember the dark days of locked churches. During these times if we falter or doubt we can look to Thomas for strength and an example of how we can live our lives as Christians, putting God first and ourselves second.

Thought for the Day (Easter 2) John 21: 1-19

The story in this passage from John, echoes the earlier one from Luke (5: 1-11). Some of the disciples are in their boat and they haven't caught anything. After a long and difficult night they are exhausted **and** empty handed.

Any of you that have been fishing will know just how long everything takes. I remember as a child my dad decided to take up fishing, I'm not sure why. It might be because someone gave him a second hand rod and work was tough so he thought, or my mum thought, it would be a good way to unwind. Well, I remember one day in particular when we all went to the river. I helped get the kit prepared and we sat and waited. We waited and waited. I got restless and so did the dog, so most of us set off on a long and beautiful walk along the river bank. Some time later we returned and I excitedly asked for an update, would we be having trout for tea I wondered. No, we wouldn't was

the answer. After hours trying, not even a minnow was in the net. I didn't go again and I'm not sure it did dad's blood pressure any good.

Our Biblical story would resonate with the hearer because fishing was a core business in Biblical days, many people had their own boats, or worked for someone who did. It was a meagre living scraping by, hoping for enough fish to feed the family and then sell a little to buy other provisions. We can imagine the disappointment in both the Lucan story and the one from John.

It's not just the disappointment that binds them, the intents are similar too.

In Luke the disciples are called by Jesus to follow him. First he asks them to obey his instructions to go back out and cast their net on the other side of the boat, which they do without question. Then once their nets are full he commands them to leave everything and follow him, which again they do without question.

In the gospel reading from John, Jesus has been crucified, has died and is risen. He has already appeared to the disciples twice, or three times if you count Mary Magdalene. The disciples have gone back to their previous way of life. Without Jesus to follow they are once again fishermen rather than fishers of people. Are they disappointed that their new lives haven't lasted, are they downhearted. I would say yes, most probably they are. Add to that the frustration of not even getting fishing right this day, they are a sorry lot, focussed on themselves individually rather than seeing the bigger picture.

Jesus appears and they don't recognise him. Perhaps they don't really look at him and they are too wrapped up in self. Despite not recognising him when he calls them to return and cast their nets on the other side of the boat, they simply follow his instructions in a similar way to the early call in Luke. Why do they do that? Are they on auto-pilot, is it because they love their work, is it that there is a specialness about the way the man tells them what to do? It's another of the mysteries of scripture.

They do as Jesus says and they haul in a huge catch of 153 fish. Why 153? Scholars have been considering this for years. One consideration is that it is the number that tells us of the salvation of humanity. St. Augustine worked out the maths. Humanity cannot be saved without keeping the 10 commandments. On account of the fall, we cannot keep the commandments without the help of grace and the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the number 7 signifies holiness, since God blessed the 7th day and made it holy (Gen 2:3). 10 plus 7 equals 17, and if all the numbers from 1 to 17 are added together they equal 153. Hence, the 153 fish signify that all the elect are to be saved by the gift of grace (7) and the following of the commandments (10).

(St Augustine, *Commentary on John*, 72.8)

This helps us to see this passage of scripture as a recommissioning of the disciples by Jesus. After the catch they have breakfast together. By this point they know it is Jesus, but they daren't ask him. Jesus gives them bread and fish, turning breakfast into a Eucharistic event despite there being no wine, and for the first time fish. The disciples understand this recommission and it brings them new hope. They are ready for the challenge.

Jesus then turns his attention specifically to Peter. Just as Peter denied Jesus three times in the garden before his trial and crucifixion, Jesus asks Peter three times to lead his people. Jesus isn't going to be around for long and his followers need an earthly leader to keep them motivated and on track. Jesus identifies Peter the Rock as that leader.

This recommissioning sends us the message that we too must be ready for the challenges of discipleship. We must be ready to cast our nets on the other side. We mustn't become complacent and just keep on doing what we have always done. We must keep going too, even when we are tired, our nets are empty, nobody answers when we knock on the door, or worse it's slammed in our face. Following Jesus isn't just for the good times, it's also for the tough times. It's for all time.

As we continue to develop in our Ministry Area, let us use the opportunities and the challenges to learn from each other. To work together to cast our nets in new directions, encourage each other when they return empty and help haul in the fish when they are full.

Thought for the Day (Easter 4) John 15:22-30

The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Vocations Sunday, or Good Shepherd Sunday. It's a good time to reflect on what we are doing and how we are living our lives as Christians and to try to discern if God is calling us in a new way.

So often we get caught up in the things we 'usually do', the familiar and regular patterns of worship, prayer and action. How often do we inspect ourselves and ponder on what God is telling us and teaching us? We love the familiar and we don't like change, so why would we seek out change if we feel spiritually nourished? Well God has a funny way of interfering in our lives and nudging us when we least expect it. And if we are not careful, we can miss what he is saying or ignore where he is leading us.

My own experience of this is that God will catch up with you in the end. From singing in the choir, through sidesperson, warden, committee member,

chair of executive group, Reader, God has been calling me for years. At times I was too busy to stop and listen. At other times maybe I wanted to rush ahead. And then there was 'doing this will be enough', but God had other ideas. He never gave up and now here I am a fully- fledged priest. I feel blessed and I no longer feel that restlessness or 'nagging'.

Even when we feel that we are where God wants us to be, doing what he wants us to do, we must never be complacent. We are always growing in our faith if we let God guide us and lead us.

In this chapter of the gospel according to St. John, Jesus calls himself the good shepherd. He says that the one who enters by the gate into the sheepfold is the shepherd of the sheep. The shepherd calls the sheep and the sheep recognise his voice and come to him. Jesus uses the imagery of sheep and shepherd because the people will understand it.

It is important for us to understand how shepherds worked with their sheep in Biblical times. Unlike now when we have sheepdogs, or four by fours herding the sheep from behind, driving them forward, then the shepherd led the sheep from the front. Wherever the shepherd went the sheep followed.

Jesus describes the good shepherd as the one who lays down their life for the sheep. The shepherd does not run away when the wolf comes prowling around but stays and defends the sheep, keeps them calm and on the right path. We can see that this describes what Jesus will do. He lays down his life for us. His hearers at the time would not know that his path leads to death and resurrection. So he tells them that he lays down his life to take it up again. He also tells them he lays it down of his own accord. That there is no one that can take his life, because he freely gives it.

All this gives us the context of the passage for Vocations Sunday. We hear that the Jews keep asking Jesus if he is the Messiah. They want him to spell it out for them. Jesus reminds them that he has told them but they don't believe him. Have they chosen not to believe him? Are they asking because they simply haven't listened before? Jesus tells them plainly, "...you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep." It doesn't matter how many times Jesus tells them they just don't see it. When he restores the sight of the blind man, they don't see the miracle, they simply see that he has worked on the Sabbath.

Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice." Jesus tells us that everyone who hears his voice belongs to him. What wonderful words of encouragement. We don't have to earn it. We don't have to get everything right, we don't have to have a prescribed religious experience. We have an abundant life because we

belong to God. Everything depends on God, not on our human wants or weaknesses. Nobody can snatch us away from Jesus, like a wolf tries to steal a sheep.

Of course this abundance doesn't necessarily mean a long life, a wealthy life or one where we are granted high status - all human drivers. The abundant life we have in Jesus is a life filled with his love, a love that overflows to others. It is an eternal life because it comes from God who is eternal.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. On this Vocations Sunday let us ask ourselves 'am I a good sheep?' Am I listening to God, have I given myself over to him, am I following him? If we really listen to Jesus, it's truly amazing where he leads us.

Thought for the Day (Easter 5) John 13:31-34

Have you ever been barred from going in somewhere, and if you have how did that make you feel?

I remember being in my early twenties. Some friends and I were playing in a skittles league and we had an away match. We piled into a couple of cars and headed off quite excited. We arrived at this Victorian looking building, a working men's club and in we trooped to be met with total silence. "You can't come in here." I thought that was strange and then realised the comment was directed at me. "This is a men only bar." I was mortified, embarrassed and rather cross. "You can sit in the lounge." I was directed to a cheerless lounge where I spent the evening on my own.

Yes, I was the only woman on the team and yes the skittle alley was off the men only bar. It was a long and lonely evening, but it gave me time to think about exclusion, being different, not belonging. I also wondered about what was happening next door, especially when hearing cheers and laughter. What was I missing? Everyone was having a good time except me, it's not fair.

In our gospel reading Jesus tells the disciples, "Where I am going, you cannot come." I wonder how that made them feel. Did they think it wasn't fair? Did they feel forsaken? After all they have been with Jesus for some time. They have turned away from their usual lives, literally dropped everything to follow him and here he is saying they can't go with him where he is going next. How confusing, worrying, hurtful perhaps.

Jesus pre-empts their sense of abandonment by giving them a new commandment, "Love one another." Jesus wants them to care for each other, develop each other's talents and skills, admonish each other when they get it

wrong, and above all encourage and support each other, especially when things are looking bleak.

Jesus knows they will find life difficult when he is gone, that they will mourn his loss, that they won't understand and so he tries to focus their minds on what they need to do, what they should do even when he isn't physically with them.

It's incredible that Jesus focusses on the needs of the disciples and care for them given the context of this passage of scripture. John is describing Jesus' last supper with his friends. He knows he is about to go to from this world to his father. How does he respond? Quite simply, through love, "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." He knows that his father has given all things into his hands, and that he has come from God and is going to God. He responds to this by washing the disciples' dirty feet.

Jesus also knows who is about to betray him. This troubles him and he announces that this will happen and then immediately feeds his betrayer by dipping bread into wine and giving it to Judas Iscariot. Judas rushes out to do what he feels he must, which is where our scripture reading begins. Rather than talk about what is troubling him and the consequences of Judas' actions, Jesus concentrates on his glorification. He is referring to his death on the cross and his resurrection. But his main focus is making sure that the disciples are prepared for when they cannot see him anymore.

He has demonstrated that love is not simple, it's not easy, it's in the mundane acts as well as the heroic. By washing his disciples' feet and telling them that if they love one another they must wash each other's feet, he spells out just what love means. Heroic love is laying down one's life for one's friends, mundane love is caring for someone's daily needs. Both are important, one does not 'trump' the other.

Perhaps even more importantly, although Jesus says we must love one another, he doesn't just mean disciple loving disciple. That's the easier bit, because they are people like us and it's always easier when people look like us, behave like us, understand us.

Earlier in the gospel according to St John we learn of God's love for the world. God doesn't just love believers, he loves everyone, and that is our challenge. As the late great Desmond Tutu said, "...if we are to truly understand that God loves all of us, we must recognise that He loves our enemies too."

Jesus demonstrates his love for Judas, who will betray him, Peter who will deny him, and all the disciples who will let him down in his hour of greatest

distress. Our challenge as Christians is to follow his example and truly love one another despite what others do, not choose who we love because of what they do.

Thought for the Day (Easter 6; Rogation Sunday) John 19: 23-29

The sixth Sunday of Easter is called Rogation Sunday because it comes before the three Rogation days that precede Ascension Day.

The word rogation comes from the Latin verb *rogare*, meaning "to ask", so it is time traditionally set aside to ask for God's blessing on a particular place or community. In times past people have beaten the bounds, walking the parish boundary and asking for blessing within it. It is a time to bless seeds and all aspects of agriculture, for a good crop.

This year it is appropriate to pause and reflect on the seeds and crops in Ukraine. Ukraine's exports of grain and oilseeds have mostly stopped because of the war. Ukraine is ranked in the top 10 of agricultural exports for several crops. It is in first place for sunflower oil and sunflower flakes, second place for rapeseed and millet, fourth place for corn and barley, and fifth place for wheat. Much of these are exported across Europe. Ukraine relies heavily on agriculture for national income and many countries rely heavily on Ukraine to feed their people. On top of this India has just announced that it is suspending exports of wheat due to the extraordinary heatwave there. Wheat prices are now 59% higher than at the beginning of the year. It's a very worrying time and it reminds us how interdependent nations are. We need each other more than ever, as our populations grow, the climate changes, our green spaces dwindle and we are losing bio-diversity.

Some of you may have heard about the Bee Roads initiative, where over 2000 farmers are putting aside small patches of land for wild flowers to encourage bees and other pollinators necessary for successful crops, trying to increase sustainability. And we can do our bit by leaving a small patch of grass to grow wild, or leaving a few logs in the corner of the garden. Simply having a flowering plant on an outside window sill can help. I know that churches are leaving parts of their grounds to become nature gardens too. Not only the right thing to do, but a wonderful resource for Sunday Schools and youth groups.

Rogation isn't simply asking for blessing on crops it's more than that. It's asking for blessing on place and all within it. It's as much about our spiritual wellbeing as it is about our physical needs. Yes we need food each, water to

drink and somewhere to shelter but they don't satisfy our spiritual hunger. We need both to live our lives as Christians, faithful in the eyes of God.

We know where to buy our bread but where do we get our spiritual food? We don't get it by coming to a beautiful church and singing some lovely hymns, although of course they help; but when churches are closed for repair and we meet in the hall, the spiritual nourishment doesn't stop, it moves with us.

Jesus' disciples got their nourishment directly from him. They lived, ate, slept and travelled with him for years. He was constantly at their side, steering them in the right direction, putting them right when they made their many mistakes, forgiving them over and over again.

In the gospel reading for Rogation Sunday, Jesus is again preparing them for when he won't be with them anymore. He has given them the new commandment, to love one another, and again he focuses on love here as he sets out his expectations. He expects them to continue to follow his teachings, to remember all he said and done, and in return he promises a great presence. He promises that God will love them and God will be with them. How amazing is that. God will love them and keep them on the right path.

Jesus knows how difficult it is for the disciples to keep on the right path even when he is with them, so how much more difficult will it be when he is no longer there. He softens his impending departure by telling them that God will send them an Advocate, the Holy Spirit. This is the first time we hear about this presence as the Holy Spirit. The Advocate is a presence the disciples will need in order to love as they are called to love. It will, as Jesus promises, be as if he is still with them. The Holy Spirit will teach them and remind them of everything he has said to them. The Spirit will continue their learning journey, so they will not be left alone and they won't have their spiritual nourishment cut off.

To further calm their fears of being left alone Jesus gives them peace. Peace is something we all need, and especially at this time. Jesus reassures the disciples as he bestows his peace on them.

Jesus doesn't wish them peaceful lives he **gives** them his peace. This peace is an active gift. It is an active working toward peace in multiple situations. This Spirit and peace will propel the disciples and later the church into active discipleship and mission. It is this peace, given by God in Jesus' name that enables the disciples to live lives of faithfulness.

It is this peace that propels us in our spiritual journeys. We too have the Holy Spirit breathing the breath of God on us and in us. We too are bestowed

with God's love. This is how we are fed and nourished every day, how we are sustained with holy food.

Thought for the Day (Trinity Sunday) John 16: 12-15

Threes feature quite a lot in the Bible. Jesus was baptised at the age of 30 and died three years later aged 33 at 3 o'clock under an inscription written in three languages. On the third day he rose again and in a resurrection appearance he asked Simon Peter 'do you love me more than these?' three times, echoing the three times that Peter denied him.

Three, then, is a very special number. Trinity Sunday gives us the opportunity to try to explore the Threeness of God a little more closely. But this is and always has been quite a challenge.

The doctrine of the Trinity is a Christian doctrine rooted in the central belief of one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine has been the subject of much attention since the term was first coined by Tertullian in about 217, and not everyone agrees with each other about it.

So what evidence is there in Scripture, particularly in the New Testament to support, or otherwise the doctrine of the Trinity? This is important as many opponents of the Trinity use the fact that the word does not appear in the Bible as evidence to refute the doctrine. However the writings of Paul and John, for example gives those of us who believe in the Trinity some good reference points.

Paul was a monotheistic Jew, he believed in one God. Where we can most clearly see Paul's belief of the nature of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is through reading his first letter to the Corinthians, where he reaffirms his belief in one God and one Lord, Jesus Christ; and by then reading his account of the Christological hymn in his letter to the Philippians.

We can also see the foundations of the Trinity in the writings of the gospel according to John. This is considered by scholars to be the most theologically developed gospel, and was probably written much later than the synoptic gospels. The Prologue emphasises God the Father and God the Son being one and together from the beginning, and John's testimony that he, "... saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him," provides further evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity.

John threads Trinitarian passages through the gospel, as evidenced, for example, in chapters 15 and 16 when the Holy Spirit is always united with the Son and the Father; and chapter 20, where Jesus tells the disciples "Peace be

with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you". When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

This scriptural context is also demonstrated in the First Letter of John chapter 5 verse 7, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: And these three are one," the opening quote from John Wesley's sermon on the Trinity, preached in 1775.

In our gospel reading for Trinity Sunday Jesus reveals the Holy Spirit to the disciples as the Spirit of truth. The Spirit will continue to guide them and teach them when Jesus is no longer physically with them. What the spirit reveals comes directly from Jesus, what Jesus reveals comes directly from the Father. Since the Spirit takes what belongs to Jesus, and since what belongs to Jesus belongs to God, then even in Jesus' absence God's revelation to the world and to the church is still available through the Spirit. This is Father, Son and Holy Spirit in unity.

In his sermon on the Trinity at Durham Cathedral in 2006 the Reverend Canon Dr Stephen Cherry explained a model of the Trinity centred on one developed by the theologian David Cunningham and based on the idea of water. Canon Cherry said "Now there are several ways of making not very good Trinitarian models based on water. For instance, you may like to think of the Trinity as a celestial version of the H₂O molecule with the Spirit and the Son as the hydrogens bonded to the oxygen, the Father. But that does not work as oxygen and hydrogen are so different. Equally, you may think of the three states of water, steam and ice as parallels to the Trinity, but this does not work either as there is no kind of relationship between ice, liquid and steam - they are the same thing under different conditions rather than different in themselves.

What Cunningham suggests, in a nutshell, is this. That we think in terms of God as source, wellspring and living water.

The picture of a river comes to mind and the idea is that there is an eternal and original source (in traditional theology 'the Father') and that this in turn generates a spring (the Son) which overflows as living, moving water which tumbles down and brings life (an image of the Spirit)".

For me as a lover of water, this image of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as an ever flowing outpouring of love, life and grace washing over us and washing us clean, tumbling with energy and vitality is a powerful and uplifting one. As each part of the river cannot be isolated, or seen as either the same or completely separate, it embodies the words of the Athanasian Creed "the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity."

Thought for Day (Trinity 1) Luke 8.26-39

The story of Legion is a challenging one in many ways. It's set in the context of being one of four miracle stories told sequentially before the twelve Apostles are sent out to "proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal". It also comes after Jesus redefines family as being those who "hear the word of God and do it" and after he challenged the disciples asking, "Where is your faith?" when they were caught in the raging storm.

The story plays out in the country of the Gerasenes. This is Gentile country. We know this because the people keep pigs. This is significant because it tells us of the universality of Jesus' power. His power is not simply over Jewish people it is over all of us.

Jesus and his followers come across a man possessed by demons. He is naked and lives in tombs amongst the dead. We can deduce that the man is loved and cared for as best they can, because we know that those who look after him try to keep him shackled and clothed. In this way they try to keep him, and themselves safe and can bring him food. When the demons become too strong he breaks the shackles and runs to the tombs, where no-one would be able to find him. The demons keep him torn between imprisoned safety and lonely freedom.

When Jesus comes across him he talks to the demon directly. The demon responds to him and knows who he is. He gives his name as Legion because so many demons are in control of him. Jesus speaks to the demons and commands them to leave the man. They beg Jesus not to send them back to the abyss. This indicates that they know the power of Jesus and they are afraid of that power. They know his power is greater than theirs, and their Gentile master. It's interesting that they use their knowledge to try to negotiate with him. Don't send us to the pit, but instead let us enter the pigs. Jesus allows them to enter the pigs, then they rush down the hill and into the lake and are drowned.

The swineherds see what is happening and run off back to the town to tell people. The people come out and they see the man fully clothed and sitting at Jesus' feet. They are afraid. Those who witnessed what Jesus has done tells them that the man has been healed. Everyone is frightened and so they tell Jesus to leave, which he does.

The man wants to come with Jesus, but Jesus says no, he is to go home and tell everyone what God has done for him. This is not the usual response from Jesus, he often wants people to follow him. What we can learn from this

is that our vocation is not always what we expect, want or plan. Our vocation can surprise us. The man wants to follow Jesus by going with him, Jesus wants the man to follow him by staying and spreading the message of God to his community. We cannot generalise about what Jesus asks of his followers. Vocation is unique to the one called. Often it seems that we are called to do that which we do not want to do.

The man goes back and tells people what he knows, that Jesus has healed him, that Jesus has saved him. This takes a lot of courage. He has been possessed for some time, so probably he is well known for all the 'wrong' reasons. People will have been watching him for some time, they may not trust that he is well. He has been healed by some great power and they are afraid of that power. Not only that, this is the man that has destroyed their livelihood. He is responsible for the pigs being drowned. The man uses his newly found freedom of self-determination to do God's will and spread the good news.

We too can often hear many competing voices when we are trying to discern God's call to us. We too can do what this man did, listen to Jesus and obey his power, rather than try to impose our own wants on him. Amen.

Thought for the Day (Trinity 2) Luke 9.51-62

This passage of Scripture sees Jesus on his final journey to Jerusalem. He has already talked to his disciples about his impending suffering there, they have declared their faith in him as Messiah, and have seen him transfigured with Moses and Elijah. Despite all these things they are still unable to grasp what is about to happen and the horror of Jesus' last days.

Jesus has "set his face on Jerusalem". He is determined to get there no matter what. Nothing can distract him, nothing can make him turn from his path.

We hear that Jesus doesn't seem notice the Samaritans. This shows just how focused he is on his task to get to Jerusalem. This is what God's plan is for him and nothing can stop him. Mention of the Samaritans is significant, because throughout Scripture Jesus shines a light on the Samaritans, a light that is positive, a light of compassion. We know that Jews did not mix with Samaritans and Jesus' teachings about them, the most remembered, perhaps, being the Good Samaritan, has been a way of trying to break down barriers between neighbours; and yet now Jesus doesn't notice them, and they seem to ignore him. We don't know if they simply don't want to distract him,

because he has his “face set on Jerusalem” or if it is more of an affront to Jesus.

In typical disciple fashion his followers leap to the assumption that it is the latter, perhaps easy for a race that doesn’t hold another with regard, and they offer to rain down fire and brimstone on them. Jesus’ response is to rebuke them. He tells them off for even thinking about so doing. Again we don’t know whether he sees their offer as another distraction or if he is cross because they aren’t acting with compassion towards another race, despite his teachings to do so.

Whatever the reason behind it they go to another village. As they are travelling along Jesus teaches his followers about how hard it is to follow him.

One disciple says to him that they will follow him wherever he goes. Jesus responds with the lovely description, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests. But the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”.

As a nation we hold great store in having somewhere we can call home.

I don’t know if any of you have ever been homeless. No-one in my family has but our eldest daughter came very close a few years ago. A single parent of two small children with complex needs, her landlord gave her notice to quit because he was selling all his properties. Due to her circumstances she kept getting rejected when seeking another home and became increasingly anxious that her children wouldn’t have a roof over their heads. At the eleventh hour an agent understood her situation and negotiated with the landlord of a lovely little house, where they were happy for several years. It was a very stressful time for us all, but she had a safety net, us. Of course we wouldn’t see them out on the streets. So many homeless people are there for complicated and difficult reasons, for some their family situations don’t help.

In some cultures, travelling and not having a permanent home is simply the way of life. Many Irish Travellers still lead a wandering lifestyle, moving on together in families and communities. They are part of a handful of traditional nomadic communities still roaming the planet in small groups, often travelling with animals that are vital to their livelihoods. They work hard to keep their ancient cultural beliefs and behaviours alive, surviving against the odds of climate change and urban encroachment on their territorial lands, suspicion and discrimination. These communities include the Kochi people of southern and eastern Afghanistan, the Bedouin people of the Negev desert, the Sami people, mostly in Scandinavia and about 2,000 in Russia, the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania, the Mongols of China, the Dukha of Mongolia, and the Gaddi shepherds throughout Himachal Pradesh, India.

Jesus' followers are usually described as coming from communities with homes, villages and towns, they are not wanderers by choice. Jesus' words here gives them directly a very clear message about how following him will change their worlds. He has no place to call home, they have to give up home to follow him.

So are they pilgrims or are they nomads? We understand the concept of pilgrimage, indeed some of have been on pilgrimages. Pilgrims are on a journey and this journey has a fixed end point. Jesus and his followers are journeying to Jerusalem, so in that sense they are pilgrims. But Jesus also knows that after his earthly ministry the apostles and others will also be sent out across the world to places they don't know, without a planned end point. They will go wherever the Spirit sends them. So in this sense they are nomads.

We, as Christians are pilgrims, we are travelling on a journey with an end point. That end point is the Kingdom of God. We have a sense of direction, we look forward to our final resting place with God, and we do all that we can to plough the straightest furrow to get there.

God also calls us to be nomads. To truly follow Christ we must listen to voice of God, to understand that we don't know all his plans for us. We have to trust that we too are sent out to do his work, whatever and wherever that may take us. Pilgrim and nomad, sometimes in fellowship with others, sometimes alone, just us and God.

Weekend Word Friday 1st July 2022

Dr Heather Payne Consultant Paediatrician

For anyone who, like me, loves pretty much any sport - things are looking good. Wimbledon's in full swing, and coming down the track is women's and men's international cricket, Wales rugby boys touring South Africa, Formula 1, Tour de France (with 3 Welsh riders no less), Women's Euros, Commonwealth games- and that's just July.

I was lucky to have sport-loving parents, so I was always encouraged to have a go, and this has led me to become mediocre at a wide range of ball games. My superficial engagement with skills means I'm a great loser- I just enjoy playing and don't mind so much about winning.

But I recognise and admire the dedication and focus of those at the top levels in any sport- when it becomes a profession not just a pastime. Many people are enthusiastic, persistent, incredibly fit and disciplined - but most of

us are amateurs - we do it for the love of it. It makes me wonder what sets apart those people I see as having real sporting genius.

What's the difference that makes them outstanding, and keeps them at the top? It's so essential to have skill, fitness, and agility that the radio commentary I'm addicted to rarely mentions these, almost takes them for granted at this level of performance. It seems that the exceptional comes from somewhere beyond the simply physical. Is it what they call the top 3 inches- the brain? the heart? the soul? What is it that sets apart the extraordinary from the ordinary? I hear the pundits use words like confidence, faith, belief, trust, and these intangibles seem to make the unlikely win become possible.

Confidence, Faith, belief and trust are after all, spiritual words. We might believe that Geraint will win the Tour, but by the end of July we will know whether or not that's true.

What could give anyone confidence and trust in an invisible God as something to believe in? Sunday coming is the feast of St Thomas- aka doubting Thomas- one of the disciples who wasn't in the room the first time Jesus appeared to his followers after his death on the cross. When the others told him that Jesus was alive again, Thomas was scornful. It was unbelievable, and he said so. The following week, the risen Jesus turned up for lunch, offering Thomas the nail holes in his hands, from his crucifixion, to see and feel. That moment of knowledge gave Thomas faith, belief and trust to go and make disciples of all nations. The vibrant and devoted church of Kerala and India is the proof, as is the message to us all that we can have faith and confidence in a God who always believes in us even if we have doubts about believing in him.

Well- you may have heard people say that Jesus saves- I think it's more like Jesus serves, but it's up to us to return. The ball is in our court.

SUNDAY AND WEEK-DAY WORSHIP

St Edward's and St Margaret's

(For Holy Day Celebrations see Weekly Newsletter)

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH WATERLOO ROAD

Sun: 8.00 am Holy Eucharist
9.30 am Sung Eucharist
9.30 am Sunday School R.C. House
(every Sunday during school terms)
Wed: 9.30 am Holy Eucharist

ST. EDWARD'S CHURCH BLENHEIM ROAD

Sun: 11.00 am Sung Eucharist & Sunday
School
6.30 pm Choral Evensong
Wed: 10.15 am Holy Eucharist

**Check the websites/newsletter for up-to-date
information on services**

Copy date for the next magazine (Michaelmas / Harvest) is September 12th

Please send email contributions to:

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or Gwynn Ellis, rgellis@ntlworld.com, (preferably using Arial font 12)



For the latest information on Covid Guidance and Church services please visit our Website <http://www.roath.org.uk/>
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