

Trinity 9

My dear Friends,

Our Gospel reading for this coming Sunday, the ninth after Trinity comes from the Gospel of St John, Ch 6. The passage we shall hear read comes from a section relating events following the miraculous feeding of the five thousand. Jesus is trying to spend a little time away from the crowds perhaps to rest, recuperate and pray. The disciples find him on the other side of the lake and inquire when he came there. He replies "Truly, truly I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw signs but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not labour for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you." Jesus understands that his followers and the crowds that came to hear him need nourishment, hence his feeding miracle. However he wants them to focus on the spiritual life, God's teaching. He wants them to feed their souls before their stomachs.

Later he calls himself the 'bread of life' and says that those who follow him will not be hungry. Taken literally this may be attractive to a malnourished person but Jesus again stresses the importance of the true bread from heaven with its sacred meaning. Later in the gospels we see Jesus sharing bread and wine with the twelve, calling it his body and blood, and commanding them to remember him by repeating this meal. Further on in the Gospel record, Jesus is recognised following his resurrection in the act of breaking bread with those who walked with him to Emmaus.

The connection between God providing 'our daily bread' to give us necessary sustenance, as Jesus taught us to pray, and caring for our religious commitments is a common theme throughout the Scriptures. It is of course continued in the life of the Church in the service of the Holy Eucharist where we share the bread which is for us the Body of Christ. Some of you will remember the old Prayer Book Communion service. In the rubrics, or instructions for this it states "The Bread and Wine for the Communion shall be provided by the Curate and Church wardens at the charges of the Parish." This is one of the few references to the duties of the Church wardens, those who hold or have held that ancient office will tell you that there are many more tasks that they are called upon to perform. The disciples in this week's gospel, asked Jesus, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus did not reply with a myriad list of jobs that our contemporary church officers and volunteers have to complete. However they should be assured that the things they do really are an essential part of the life of the Church and the spreading of the Gospel. The practical and administrative roles they undertake on our behalf make the worship of Almighty God possible and accessible to his people in our parishes and churches.

A recent example of this will be of great comfort to those of who shivered at Christmas when St Margaret's boiler broke down! (it may be hard to think of that in current temperatures!). In the past week or so a new central heating boiler has been installed and commissioned. A huge amount of work was done in preparation for this with faculty applications, permissions, designs and plans by our warden Bob Hyett. A similar installation was done in St Edward's a while back, overseen by warden Kathie Mayer. Thank you as well to all who have contributed to the enormous cost of this. These are just two of the many important roles they and other officers do for us all quietly and efficiently in the background. We are enormously grateful to all our volunteers whichever part they play to enable us to have somewhere to share the bread of life and for us all to do the work of God, as Jesus says, and believe in him who God has sent.

With every good wish and blessing,
Stewart

The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk,
Vicar of Roath.