

Rector's Letter - Rev'd Jeremy Trew - May 2021

Dear Friends,

I'm writing this at the beginning of Holy Week, my desk littered with jottings and ideas for services and reflections for the week. This is the middle of the greatest of Christian festivals and one of the busiest times of year for clergy. Yes, we really are expected to work more than one day of the week. The cheek of it!



Looking out of my study window I can see the welcome sight of the garden springing to life and hear the distant wail of a lawnmower calling its faithful to that regular summer ritual of holding back the tide of nature. It will be good not to have any major festivals for a few months and instead turn my attention to other tasks, even the garden.

It would be good, if that were the case, but it is not. During this month we mark the Ascension, the time when the risen Jesus ascended to the Father. Ascension is actually a hugely important event in the shape of the Christian story: Jesus is born at Christmas, dies and rises at Easter, and ascends at Ascension (obvious when you think about it). For Christians its significance is that the story can now continue with a new chapter. Pentecost, and the birth of the Church, becomes possible. In these events the task that Jesus took upon himself in his teaching and serving is transferred to a new body of people, the Church, who are ordained by God to carry on that task until Jesus returns again.

The work of Jesus is, at least in theory, the work the Church tries to do today. Okay, sometimes we get it wrong, even disastrously so. More often we think that Sunday is the task of the Church, when actually it is our day off, the time when we gather together to be refreshed in our faith so that we can continue in God's work the rest of the week. The Roman Catholics recognise this in their eucharistic liturgy, ending with; "The Mass has ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." The word "Mass" from 'missio' means mission and indicates that the Mass celebrated is not just the past hour together in their church building, but the accumulation of the entire past week, finally sanctified in this shared ritual and celebration. They go from here to enjoy their day of rest and return to the mission the following morning. Ultimately, the true meaning of this Christian faith is conveyed, not in our ceremonies and sermons, but in our daily living every day. That's a demanding task but one, as Ascension and Pentecost remind us, we do not struggle with alone.

Warmest wishes

Jeremy

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