

St Mary's, Barton-upon-Humber: Readings, prayers and notices for the week July 12-19

Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ....

or

Almighty God, send down upon your Church the riches of your Spirit, and kindle in all who minister the gospel your countless gifts of grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings:

Isaiah 55 10-13; Psalm 65; Romans 8.1-11; Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

Next Sunday – Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Wisdom of Solomon 12.13, 16–19; Ps. 86.11–17; Romans 8.12-25; Matthew 13.24–30, 36–43

Services at 8.00 and 9.30

Meditation

'that in their vocation and ministry'

It's that time of year when in a normal universe we'd just have had a clutch of ordinations, so perhaps a collect about *'vocation and ministry'* isn't a complete surprise. The problem is, of course, that over the centuries the term *'vocation'* has been hi-jacked to one of a very few professions. When I was teaching – always held to be one of those *'vocation'* jobs – a cynical colleague defined a vocation as *'the excuse for not paying you very much.'* and it's certainly been used, especially by a particular sort of policymaker, as a justification for trading on others' *'vocational'* commitments.

Within the Church there's a deeply ingrained instinct that *'vocation'* (and, indeed, *'ministry'*) are the preserve of the clergy, with a few concessions being made to, say, readers, and though the last 50 years or so has seen push back against such an unscriptural position it's sometimes hard to budge. Anyhow, we do know these days that vocation and ministry are much bigger in Christian terms than What The Vicar Does – so how do we unpack it for ourselves?

I'm writing this on the Feast of St Benedict (sorry about the name-check, but you know what I'm like). What's often forgotten is that Benedict himself didn't intend to found a monastery, let alone a monastic movement, would have been astonished to learn that his Rule was still on the go 1500 years later, and, best of all, was never ordained. Fed up with city life, its shallowness and preoccupations, he felt himself being called out from where he was to go and listen to God on his own, miles from anywhere. I get the impression that he didn't find it easy – at the beginning of the Rule he says how solitary living, the hermit life, is only for the most hardened and resilient of Christians, and I can't help but wonder if he wrote that with considerable feeling, given that he left off living as a solitary and a band of like-minded people, again, all listening to God, started to form around him, exploring what it meant to develop a common life of prayer and work. Sometimes it worked out, for individuals or for communities. Sometimes it didn't. But at the heart of it all is a group of ordinary people trying to pick up what God was whispering in their hearts and then respond to it. In a way, that's all we need to know or to say about *'vocation and ministry'*.

Except, of course, that we do need to break the sense that some forms of ministry or of vocation are *'better'* than others. In the middle of the second century, Justin the Martyr wrote an account of the Sunday Eucharist, and makes it clear that it's a dialogue, not a monologue – it's not the bishop's road show but the people of God all in it together contributing their different gifts. Even the Eucharistic Prayer is said in the name of the whole people of God, and Justin pointedly remarks that the final *'Amen'* of the people is, if you like, the vote of confidence that permits the worship to be in all their names.

So as the dog-days of summer beckon, and you're too late to book a B&B in Filey or a villa in Lanzarote, once we realise that vocation and ministry both arise out of our listening to God in our hearts and then following, testing those promptings, we may have time to sit back and listen a little more. Vocations and ministry change as years pass. What new thing is God asking of me? What am I being poked into setting down? Where am I being shepherded next? Being a Christian is about committing to a life of change and growth, which is unsettling, but leads us into starting to become our deepest selves.

Pope Paul VI 50 years or so ago commented on the Benedictine movement that, after the fall of the Roman Empire, it spread across Europe bringing with it *'The Cross, the Book and the Plough.'* Subtract from that thought monkish images of Derek Nimmo in *'Oh Brother!'* or of Derek Jacobi as *'Cadfael'* – rather it's an affirmation that, whoever we are, our discipleship, our vocation, our ministry has an honourable place within God's welcome. All Christians are marked by the cross, and we display the Good News in our different ways, whether by the reading and writing of books or by the labouring at the things which make life possible in the first place, by the call to service which is government or by the service which makes sure that the bins are emptied.

And lest you worry that your vocation and ministry aren't *'important'* I leave you with one of my favourite lines from the Rule, part of the description of the Cellarer of the monastery in Chapter 31, the reading for July 8th:

Let him take the greatest care of the sick, of children, of guests and of the poor, knowing without doubt that he will have to render an account for all these on the Day of Judgement.

Let him regard all the utensils of the monastery and its whole property as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar. Let him not think that he may neglect anything.

Hospitality; compassion; kindness; care for the everyday things of life; the raw material for every vocation that there is and ever will be. For all of us.

Fr David

Those in need. Please help us keep our intercessions up to date and leave requests for prayer – either by email to david.rowett@lincoln.anglican.org, or the phone, or even a note through my door, and encourage others likewise.

Do keep in your prayers.... David Witter, who, we're happy to say, is now in Sir John Mason House, a much more congenial environment for him. In doing so he just missed Joyce Gibson, who moved out of there last weekend and is now home. As yet, no-one reports being run over by Brenda Skinner on her new mobility scooter, but as the weather improves we have no guarantee that she won't venture further afield as she gets the hang of her steed.

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For your prayers

Church: The Church in Papua New Guinea. Stephen Cottrell, the new Archbishop of York, and the diocese and province of York. General Synod, meeting 'virtually'.

World: Our own political leaders. Those charged with peace-keeping and peace-making. The governments & peoples of China, Syria and the Middle East, North Africa. All seeking to resolve the issues surrounding protection of the environment, of infection control and of migrancy.

Our Community: For all our schools and those who work in them. Those who care for the Church. Chris and Oia, to marry here later this month.

Those in need: Those whose lives or livelihoods are endangered by Coronavirus. All who live in areas of conflict or tension; the homeless, the poor, the sick, the enslaved, the hungry and the abused. Victims of terrorism.

Those for whom our prayers are asked: Melissa Milbourn, Julie Newton, Penny Archer, Kate Eaton, Mike Page-Chestney, Juliet Large, Janet Petch, David Witter, Muriel Peeps, Kathleen Horton, Sally, Nell.

Departed: Baby Ruby Gorbutt, Brian Peeps, Eva Harrison, Andrew Yard, Desmond Harness. Those who have died as a result of COVID-19, especially those who work in the caring and medical communities. Coronavirus

Coronavirus

During the Coronavirus pandemic some of the ways in which we worship have to be adapted, with restrictions on singing, use and sharing of books, seating arrangements and the administration of Communion itself all being subject to alteration as guidelines change over the coming weeks.

All COVID-19 guidelines are being observed, but please don't feel compelled to take part in any aspect of worship which leaves you feeling uncomfortable or concerned in any way for your well-being or that of those with whom you live, especially if you (or they) are in a vulnerable group.

We realise that some of the provisions may seem over-fussy or petty: some were obviously drafted with very different buildings or forms of worship in mind, others may seem over-the-top in a place where – to date – rates of infection have been low, so far as we can tell. However, it is about protecting others, an act of Christian charity towards our neighbour, so please only grumble quietly! We promise to have followed the guidelines as appropriately as we can for our situation!

All the following are printed in the order of service, but it helps to have it here too.

- Please maintain social distancing, unless sitting in household groups
- Do sanitise your hands on entering and leaving - **NB the sanitiser is highly flammable, so steer clear of naked flames for a minute or so after cleaning your hands!**
If you can't use sanitiser, the cloakrooms are available for you to wash your hands.
- We're asked to keep a list of those attending 'Just in case' contact-tracing becomes necessary. The list will be kept confidential.
- Readers/intercessors should simply come to the microphone and not use the lectern.

- Please avoid physical contact during the Peace.
- **Communion:**
will be in one kind (bread) only for the time being, and will be distributed as we do in summer, i.e. standing. There'll be no words of administration for the present.
- If you wish to receive communion, please form a (short, socially-distanced) line down the centre aisle and return to your seat via a side-aisle.
- If you usually need assistance in getting to the altar, unless this can be provided by a household member please stay in your seat and we will bring you communion.
- Although we may not be able to offer refreshments afterwards, we won't throw you out straight after the dismissal - but if you do have a conversation, do observed distancing and be aware of any who might be especially vulnerable, including while you're leaving.
- Please put your service book in the box when you go; if you don't want your notice sheet please bin it, not put it back on the pile.

We will be reintroducing the Wednesday morning 9.30, but not just yet – we want to get a feel for how it all works first. The Sunday 6.00 will return in September.

Updates

The Magazine deadline is bearing down on us, so if you have any copy please get it to Carol Thornton as soon as you can. Our thanks to those who've taken on extra distribution during COVID's peak, and to those who now feel able to take their old round back on again.

And Happy Birthday as of yesterday to Val Dukes. Not telling, but last year had an '0' at the end.

This week...

Standing Committee will meet in the Hall on Friday to discuss the roof repairs. (PCC will resume in some form in the autumn once a bit more guidance has been offered from on high.)

Continuing our trot through the saints of the season....

July 15th remembers the Anglo-Saxon **Swithun of Winchester**, about whom no more need be said except that I've never checked whether he's patron saint of weather forecasters. Sharing the date is **Bonaventure** who, along with Thomas Aquinas, was a staunch defender of the movement we know as the friars. Aquinas might be better described as a stout defender:-) He's regarded as 'the second founder of the Franciscan order, after St Francis himself, and in 1265 turned down the job of Archbishop of York. Cue for all those jokes about 'God's own county'.

Osmund (July 16) was William I's chancellor, and a force for moderation and reconciliation, especially in the time of William Rufus. He became Bishop of Salisbury in the days when the Cathedral was at Old Sarum, a hilltop a few miles from the modern city. Just to show that planning mistakes aren't a new thing, the site was abandoned once they realised there was no water supply up there. The process of declaring him a saint took more than 200 years, and after he was made 'official' in 1457, the next English saint to be declared was John Fisher in 1935. On the same date **Anne Askew** was the daughter of a Lincolnshire squire and a prominent Protestant in the 1540's in London. She was burnt at the stake at Smithfield in 1546.

And **John Keble** preached his 'Assize Sermon' on July 14th 1833, taken as the start date of the Oxford Movement. Along with Newman & Co he deserves fuller treatment than a notice sheet!