



St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh
WORSHIPPING AT HOME
Second Sunday of Lent
Sunday 28th February 2021

WELCOME to our Worshipping at Home resources for this week.

COVID-19 – LATEST the Church will continue to be open for live worship at 11am on Sundays, now with the addition of Tuesday 12noon Communion and Thursday morning Lent reflections. As lockdown rules are gradually eased, and whilst infection rates continue to fall, it is our feeling that people may now start to think about cautiously returning to church. All social distancing and quick dispersal rules will remain in place.

THIS WEEK (*Events in red will be online events*)

Sunday 28th February – Lent 2:

10am: (Zoom): Church at Home.

11.15am: (Zoom): SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code for both of these is

ID: 148-785-166, Password: Church)

11am: Holy Communion (CW). In Church and Livestreamed

Tuesday 2 March

12noon: Holy Communion BCP

Thursday 4 March

10am: Thought for Lent Week 2 **In Church and Live-streamed**

Sunday 7 March – Lent 2:

10am: **(Zoom):** Church at Home.

11.15am: **(Zoom):** SEA Church (for young people)

*(the Zoom joining code for both of these is
ID: 148-785-166, Password: Church)*

11am: Holy Communion (CW). **In Church and Livestreamed**

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

COLLECTS:

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

(or)

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FIRST READING: *Romans 4: 13-25.*

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the

righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

GOSPEL READING: *Mark 8: 31-38.*

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

You have the luxury of two sermons today. Rutton was due to be preaching at 11am, but at the last minute, he has kindly agreed to cover a service at Okewood Hill where there was sudden need for cover! So you have the sermon that Rutton would have preached, but will now preach at Okewood Hill, and you have the sermon that The Rector will preach at 11am at St Nicolas. They are two very different sermons, so both worth a read!

SERMON (written by Rev Rutton Vicajee)

Good morning everyone. We have just heard two Bible passages. First of all, Mark chapter 8: a pivotal moment in the Gospel, where Jesus predicts his death, and is saying it's going to be downhill from here, downhill towards the cross. And the disciples are saying to themselves, 'Well, we've chosen a pretty strange role-model to follow!' A role model who predicts death and pain as a reward for all our sacrifice and obedience and following. And He has just called our lead disciple the spawn of the devil! Or near enough. So, Jesus' followers are having a very bad day at the office.

But it got me thinking. If that's all pretty negative, what then *do* we require from our role models, Church or indeed other? What do we want from the people we look up to? Who is your hero and why?

And do they have to be *perfect*? Most people I look up to are loved, warts and all. I know all about warts, by the way. I grew some on my face during lockdown, just to illustrate this sermon!

Children, of course, thrive on role models. Any self-respecting Sunday school child knows that the answer to all and every role model question is "Jesus". And this earns an easy Smartie. But nevertheless, they do have other role models, and these can also provide an important insight: Fireman Sam, for example, is brave, modest, good-natured and dependable. He selflessly puts his life on the line to help others, every episode, and everyone in the village loves him. But before us men feel completely insecure, can I just say, he does have help. He gets to drive the coolest and biggest fire engine in Pontypandy, and his smooth airbrushed perfectly pink cartoon skin shows no warts at all! But if you ask children: "What is his most defining characteristic?" I suspect it would not be any of that. I suspect that it would be his *courage*. A person who is not only selfless, but *dependable*, and *rescuing*, and who does *not* promise his followers death and destruction. What about world of sport? Top sportsmen and women are also attractive. They also have courage, but I'm not sure if they *all* have Fireman Sam's qualities.

For example, I was reading an interview with one of the most famous and gifted of English cricketers; and I am talking probably about one of the top ten of all time. He said this: When asked who he looked up to the most, after a significant pause, he replied - *no one*.

Ladies and Gents – I don't know about you, but all possible red flags are now flying for me when I read that. Beware the sociopathic hero, who is brilliant, and gifted, and presents well, but who is totally flawed when it comes to relationships. Because they don't look up to *anyone*, except themselves.

Our other reading came from Romans 4, where Paul has a similar problem. Writing to both Jews and Greeks, he is trying to identify the defining characteristics of salvation in Christ. To illustrate this, can he select a suitable Christian role model with whom we, the readers, can identify?

Yes. He points us to Abraham. Abraham who is justified through faith. Abraham who believes in God against all the odds; when everything looks hopeless, when all hope in God's promises looks dead and buried. Even then, he still trusts God's promise to make him the father of many nations. Not just the Jewish nation, but many nations of faith in Christ, of which we are but one. But Abraham has faults. The same passage as Paul quotes – faith reckoned to Abraham as righteousness – comes from Genesis 15. And that chapter shows Abraham up, warts and all, as a complaining, disbelieving, arguing old moaning Minnie! Yes, he *does* believe in God's promise, but that comes second.

Well, as Jesus reminds us, it's not the son who says "yes, yes, yes" and then does nothing, who the saved. It's the son who refuses to follow his Father's orders, but then changes his mind, and *does the right thing*. *It is he* who is saved. *Faith in action* is what counts. Good intentions count for nothing.

So, Abraham is a flawed hero. But he still *is* a hero, because his faithful actions are what define him, right down to this day.

There are, of course, other faith-hero alternatives.

I have first-hand experience of this, because I was born into a different religion, with a very different prophet than Jesus Christ hanging over the mantelpiece.

To give you some idea of my upbringing, may I refer you to the film Bend It Like Beckham. If you have not seen the film, please do go and get a copy. It's brilliant. And if you have already seen that film, you'll know that the family of the main character are Sikh. Different Indian religion, but exactly the same culture, as I grew up in. And in the film, they have their theological role model staring down at them from above the lounge mantelpiece: "Babaji" - looking rather severe, and pointing his fingers upwards, reminding all who live under his gaze to be good, or else! And I have to say, we had a picture just like that at my home as well. Different prophet, same idea. And used by my parents to control and curtail my choices in exactly the same way.

I hope you can see what I'm getting at. Both in the film, and in my experience, these faith role models were not preaching a theology of love, or righteousness through faith. They were preaching a theology of righteousness through darn well doing what you are told to do by your elders! It's not even legalism – which, without love, is destructive enough. In my experience, it's an abuse of power.

And I have to say, as a young Indian growing up in a very white England, I really struggled with that - until I became a Christian. And discovered something very different.

Well, of course, that was all a long time ago. Let me tell you about the picture that I now have, as it were, over the mantelpiece.

I don't have a picture of Fireman Sam, or Abraham, the great father of Jewish and Christian faith, but I do have a picture of Christ before the High Priest Caiaphas.

Once again, we have the finger pointing, once again it is the finger of legalism, the finger of 'do as I say or else', the abuse-of-power finger. But this time, the finger isn't being pointed at us. This time, it's being pointed at Jesus. And Jesus is absorbing the pain. And so, the rather forbidding, and admonishing finger reminding us to be good, is replaced by a Christ willing to take that undeserved reproach on for us, and away from us. So that we can go free.

When it comes to people I'd like to copy, I have to be honest, and say I'm still quite attracted to the flawless, sunny heroism of Fireman Sam, or the miraculous game-saving abilities of those top-draw champion sportspeople, with the cheering crowd of thousands behind them. And I would still love to drive that great big fire engine.

But there are heroes that do even more for us than that, based not on our dreams, but on our reality. There is one in particular who takes away the condemnation, and the warts, and all the bad memories, and takes those *all* upon Himself.

So that we can go free.

Abraham's faith was reckoned to him as righteousness. And he did indeed become the father of many nations. He came good. The message is simple. Believe in the promises of God, even when things look bad, and He *will* grant us our heart's desire.

So that we can go free. Amen.

SERMON (Written by The Rector)

There is an old saying, *“There’s no gain without pain”!*

When I talk about people’s lives at their funerals, I often find myself saying that *“He (or she) put a lot into life, and so they got a lot out of it”!* I say that, because it is my experience, that the sort of people who have lived life to the full, and thrown themselves readily into all sorts of different things, are, in the end, the sort of people who have lived fulfilled lives, and are the sort of people, who at the end of their lives, have been contented with all that they have achieved!

And it’s also my own personal experience, that the things in life that have brought me the most joy, and the most fulfilment, have been the things that I have had to fight the hardest to achieve!

“There’s no gain without pain”!

So, in order to achieve our full potential, we sometimes have to go through some difficult, challenging and even painful things, to get there! This would be the case, for instance, if we wanted to get fit enough to run a marathon – we know that we would need to go through a tough, and probably painful, regime of training!

And I’m sure you’re all familiar with the old song from ‘Mary Poppins’ – ‘A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down’? (I will spare you, by not try to sing it to you!)

The song reminds us that medication can be unpleasant, and have nasty side effects – anyone who has been through chemotherapy, knows that the side-effects can be horrendous, but there are many people alive

today, who can bear testimony to the truth that chemotherapy also kills cancer!

“There’s no gain without pain”!

And we will all (I hope) willingly be going along to get our COVID-19 jabs, as I will be doing tomorrow morning, even though we know that we might well have a sore arm, and feel like rubbish for a couple of days!

“There’s no gain without pain”!

These thoughts give us an insight into what Jesus meant in the teaching we heard in today’s Gospel.

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

So often, Jesus speaks in figures of speech, and although we know from history that he did, indeed, ‘take up his Cross’ in a dreadful way, and he did, indeed, ‘lose his life’ for the sake of the Gospel, we also know that we are not all called to face literal crucifixion and death for the sake of our faith! But we are all called to make sacrifices – to make hard choices, and to metaphorically carry our crosses and die to the world! That’s what Jesus was talking about, and ‘taking up the cross’ is about using that which is painful, in order to come to the greater good!

And when we do, we're able to do it in the knowledge that ultimately it will bring us joy, it will bring us fulfillment, and it will make us better people, in just the same way that we know that unpleasant medications will, in the end, make us better!

And, although it is a paradox, this is one of the great truths of the Gospel, that from pain comes joy, from darkness comes light, from death comes life, from crucifixion comes resurrection!

"There's no gain without pain"!

And Jesus is talking here, as he so often does, about the knowledge that God's ways are very different to the world's ways, and that for the sake of our faith we will often be called to reject the way of the world, in order to embrace the way of God.

If we set our minds on divine things rather than human things, then we will be able to live our lives in truth, and live our lives in love.

And this is why we're given Lent, as a time to help us to prepare for Holy Week and Easter!

And the end result of our preparation will be that those who lose their lives (that is, accept a metaphorical crucifixion) for Jesus' sake and for the sake of the gospel, will suddenly and amazingly discover that they've metaphorically gained their lives – that the agony of crucifixion has been transformed into the joy of resurrection, and the delight of overwhelming and eternal life. A life in which all the pain, has been replaced by all the gain!

Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SEASONAL PROVISION FOR LENT

Invitation to Confession

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

cf Psalm 51.17

Introduction to the Peace

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace. *Romans 5.1,2*

Extended Preface for use with Eucharistic Prayers A, B and E

It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace

and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds
we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
for ever praising you and *saying*:

Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
and the blessing . . .

WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- The Bishop of Guildford's Community Fund, that through generous giving, it can help the most disadvantaged in Surrey and North East Hampshire

National and World Affairs:

- For our government and nation at this time of crisis.
- For those whose role it is to deliver Covid vaccinations around the UK, especially in our Village Hall.

Community and Family:

- For those who live in Rydelands.
- For all those working in Further Education

The Sick and those in Need:

- Ray Corver, Stella Goldsmith, George Hill, Helen and David, Jacquie, Philip Jones, Amy and Dennis Loveless, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean Quallington, Jean Sandow, John Skan, Bert and Eileen Steed, Maureen Steele, Dennis and Rosemary Talbot, Marion Tomkins, Darcy Wigfield, Angela Wild, Henry Young and Nicholas. *(and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Amanda and Hugh, Tim Bailey, Michael Burt, Sarah Godwin John Davies, Jan and Mark Knott, Sally Rivett, Sue Simper, Jacky Williams, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Sami Bennewith, Lizzy Laverty)*

The Departed:

- All we have known and loved, and especially Tony Black, Canon Tony Chanter, Doris O'nions and Valerie Pitt. *(and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: John Davies)*

WEEKLY NOTICES:

THOUGHT FOR LENT (Thursday Mornings). These Live-streamed Lent reflections will last approximately 30 minutes, will discuss Christ's Seven Last Words on the Cross and include hymns, readings and prayers for the season.

4th March. 10am – Revd Martin Booth ***“Today you will be with me in paradise”***

11th March. 10am – Revd Rutton Viccajee ***“Woman, behold, thy son! Behold, thy mother!”***

18th March. 10am – Revd Tim Clifford Hill ***“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*** and ***“I Thirst”***

25th March. 10am – The Rector ***“It is finished”*** and ***“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit”***

PLANTS FOR SALE. I have a few bowls of Tete -a-Tete miniature daffodils FOR SALE, priced from £5 to £12 according to size and contents. Fully hardy. Would make a lovely gift. All proceeds to Rectory Fete Plant Stall. I can deliver. Win Bracking 275573.

P.S. When the bulbs have finished flowering you can plant them in the garden and give the bowls back to me and I will grow some more for next year !!

JOIN YOUR FRIENDS FOR COFFEE AFTER 11AM SERVICE EACH WEEK

Are you missing meeting up with friends over coffee after Church? We are pleased to be making it a regular feature to meet on Zoom when the 11am Service ends, for a chat and a catch up! The scheduled Zoom Meeting will be open from 11.45 onwards. **Meeting ID: 830 2040 3902 and the Passcode: ‘Coffee’**

MIDWEEK MORNING PRAYER Members of the Ministry Team say Morning Prayer each Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8am. From this week, we intend to return to mee meeting in Church, but we will continue to Zoom as well. If anybody else would like to join us, the Zoom codes are: **Meeting ID: 546 358 461 Passcode: ‘MP’**

KEEP IN TOUCH:

Rector - Revd Canon Roy Woodhams

(Day off: Monday)

Tel: 01483 800655. Email: roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Curate - Revd Tim Clifford Hill

(Day off: Monday and furloughed Saturday)

Tel: 01483 276267. Email: tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Part time Curate - Revd Rutton Viccajee

(Works Wednesday, Friday, Sunday)

Tel: 01252 910212. Email: rutton@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Administrator - Nicola Craven-Smith

(Works Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9.30-2.30)

Tel: 01483 273620. Email: nicola@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Young People's Minister - Gabrielle Clarke

(Currently only working Monday, Thursday and Sunday)

Tel: 07427 748408. Email: gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Church Website: www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

and on **Facebook**.