

The Fifth Sunday after Easter

Rogation Sunday.

My Dear Friends.

The Introit for today is as follows:- With a voice of singing declare ye, tell this; alleluia; utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, the Lord has redeemed his people, alleluia, alleluia. Ps. 66 O be joyful in God all ye lands, sing praises unto the honour of his Name: make His praise to be glorious.

During these dark days of the Covid 19 pandemic, it is all too easy to forget that there are still many wondrous and joyful things taking place. As spring progresses there is an abundance of new life everywhere, in the fields and the hedgerows we see, smell and witness the beauty of creation and new life all around us. Babies are being born and expectant parents welcoming with love and joy new and precious life.

However, and by sharp contrast we are being informed daily of the tragedy of loved ones being lost to this most vile of viruses. Lives are being lost prematurely and loved ones left bereft and devastated, it is utterly heart-breaking. Our brilliant NHS staff and Care Home workers are doing a quite exceptional job in nursing so many desperately sick and dying patients. Not only nursing them, but comforting them as their lives slowly ebb away, it must be quite honestly utterly devastating.

But it has to be noted, that through the dedication of the heroic few, many people are being nursed back to good health. We thank God for this and earnestly pray that more and more will survive, and that those who mourn may be comforted.

Today's Epistle gets right to the heart of something that I hold very dear to my heart. For those who regularly attend St Katherine's Cathedral, you will know it is something that I regularly point out as critically relevant to all Christians, and never more so than a time like this.

The Lesson from the Epistle of blessed James the Apostle. Chapter 1. 22.

"Dearly beloved, be ye doers of the word, not just hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer: he is like unto a man holding his natural face in a glass : for he be - holdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth, what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man be blesses in his deed. If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deciveth his own heart, this man's religion is in vain. Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world."

As Christians we have a duty to do whatever we can to help and support those who are in the greatest need especially by the offering up of our prayers in support of all of those in need of Love and Healing. As believers in the Word, we must also be doers of the Word both visibly and invisibly. The prospect of our Churches reopening in the not too distant future is to be welcomed. We have a responsibility to ensure the safety of all of those who may wish to attend by following whatever guidelines that may be published in due course.

I would like to close today by quoting a few words by Elizabeth Fox Howard:

"In the present world of turmoil, what can we do?

I think constantly of a saying of Luther's which roughly translated, runs: 'Even if the world came to an end to-morrow, we will still, in spite of that, plant little apple tree to-day!' We can all start with our own hearts, our own homes, making, if we can, a little pool of peace where others may find refreshment. We can pray, regularly and hopefully. We can keep our tempers, do small household chores cheerfully, help our neighbours, and stop grumbling! Very, very insignificant things in the face of world problems: but as the old saying goes, we can put a drop of oil on troubled waters; and so each of us may serve God's purpose as far as we may."

Please keep safe and well, you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

May God Bless You All.

IN His Love

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