Letter from Andy

Often these weekly letters from me are about practicalities of opening up the churches. On this occasion I’m not thinking about those things. Instead I’m asking the question of how we grow our faith.

This Sunday’s reading takes us outside into the fields for the parable of the sower. As I write this the rain is pouring down outside and I’m quite happy not to be in it! But rain is necessary for plants to grow, and perhaps we need some rain in our lives to help us grow in our faiths.

The Parable of the sower asks a number of questions.

What does good soil look like in our lives?

What does good fruit look like in our lives?

Is the parable about lots of different people and the way they accept, or don’t accept, the gospel, or is it about me and my life? Is it about how sometimes my life is filled with weeds and thorns and stony places?

When we look at it in that light it asks us questions about how we can help put ourselves into the best soil we can, and I guess that’s something we can do whether we’re in lock-down or not.

Good soil for growing our faith requires us to actively seek out the best ways to enable God’s message of love and forgiveness and joyful life to take root in our lives. It could mean reading Christian books, or joining a Bible study group (like Alan Stanley has been hosting on zoom), or accessing other kinds of resource that will help us. I was talking to one congregation member the other week who has been viewing services from Holy Trinity Brompton. Others have been accessing Salvation Army services or Alpha courses. The wonderful thing about lock-down is that we have suddenly realised that there’s all these ways to reflect on Jesus’ message out there. What is the right one for you?

One thing I have been thinking of for a while is to gather some like-minded people to reflect on a rule of life. This would be to help give a spiritual order to our lives in community to help create that good soil. If you would be interested in joining such a group (virtually by zoom at first) then please email me on reverandy1@gmail.com or phone me on 0113 2892437.

If you’ve never heard of a rule of life and want to find out more then just google ‘rule of life Church of England’ and you’ll soon get the idea, but to give you a brief idea of what it’s about, it’s trying to bring some of the monastic structure of living into daily life. That doesn’t mean praying five times a day or being celibate, but it’s more about living intentionally in the best way possible, regularly examining your actions and motives and reflecting on how best to get away from the bad soil and into the good.

This can be done individually, but is best done in community as that way you have others around you to encourage and challenge you when things don’t work out as you hope, as they always do.

If this sounds like something you’d be interested in then get in touch and we’ll see if we can get a group to walk this path together.

Blessings.

Andy