

Andy's letter for 9th August

Tomorrow's gospel reading is one of the great images of New Testament faith. Peter walking on the water having been invited out of the boat by Jesus.

It reminds us that we are all encouraged to get out of the boat of our expectations and take risks in exercising our faith.

On one level this passage challenges me in the decision we have taken as a benefice not to open the churches for public worship until September. Some would (and do) say that we are being too timid. I understand that point of view but have taken the view that society is all too easily being lulled into the idea that we're over the worst and that we can happily return to life more closely resembling normal. My concern (and this is borne out in current experiences across the continent) that cases are likely to rise and further tightening is likely to need to happen.

Simply put, I want the church to be part of the solution not part of the problem. Yes we need to be bold in our faith and step into the unknown with assurance that Christ is by our side, but that doesn't mean we ought to put vulnerable people's lives at risk.

Perhaps instead, we need to think about how we can step out into a new unknown world and do Church differently with confidence and fortitude. Over the coming months the three churches will be looking at how we can continue to do things online even as we return to physical public worship. We need to see this time as an opportunity not to be missed as well as a time of hardship and difficulty.

Today's letter will be my last for a few weeks as I'm going on 'staycation' from the 13th August until the 28th and so, though we're not planning on going anywhere, I will be out of touch.

Blessings.

Andy



All Saints'
at the heart of the
community



TRINITY 9

Sunday 9th August

BABY STEPS

At last!

We are moving forward,
and towards opening All Saints' for Public Worship.

The plans are to have a short, said service of

Morning Prayer

on Wednesday 2nd September at 11am,
and Wednesday 9th and 16th.

We have to observe social distancing,
will need to wear face coverings
and use sanitising hand gel.

(The gel will be provided on the way into the building).

Please watch the news!

The government may shut churches again!
and our plans may have to change.

If all goes well, further plans will be outlined

COLLECT for 9th AUGUST

Gracious Father,
revive your Church in our day,
and make her holy, strong and
faithful,
for your glory's sake
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

POST COMMUNION

Holy Father, who gathered us here around
the table of your Son, to share this meal
with the whole household of God:
in that new world where you reveal the
fullness of your peace,
gather people of every race and language
to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen

Readings for Sunday 9th August

(Romans 10: 5-15)

Matthew 14: 22-33

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Reflection on Matthew Ch.14 vs 22-33

Peter was a fisherman, outspoken, bold and loved Jesus, but he was human and made mistakes. He put his trust in Jesus when he stepped out of the boat but he took his eyes away from the power which Jesus has and only saw the rough waves and felt the strong wind then the fear came upon him. One would think that being a fisherman Peter would be used to rough waves and strong winds! Before we make any judgment about Peter what about the other disciples who were in the boat? Initially Peter had far more courage and trust in Jesus than they did. They were terrified when they saw Jesus walking on the water and certainly were not willing to get out of the boat.

I doubt any of us are going to try to walk on water but in our lives there have probably been many times when we have been frightened of the unknown. What do we do when a crisis looms in our life? Do we pray about it then leave it to God to sort out, or do we pray, leave it to God, then constantly continue to worry about it?

Like Peter I am sure most people have a mixture of faith and fear. Since lockdown first started way back in March we have all had to face a different way of living. Major problems such as illness, death of family and friends and other such issues didn't just stop because we were in lockdown. However, things are slowly getting back to normal and what used to be routine is now a challenge to some people. For eg. people who have been working from home, now returning to work in rather different workplaces; the elderly whose confidence has disappeared by being confined to their house; people going to other countries on holiday wondering what it will be like, will they get back safely or will they be stuck due to a second virus wave; parents worrying whether their children will be safe when they return to school are only a few examples.

Peter took his eyes off Jesus and he began to sink. Is this what is going to happen to us? Jesus will come to us in our storms of life and doesn't want us to be afraid but in order not to fear we should never take our eyes away from him. Nothing is too large for Jesus to put right. Jesus gave his life for us, so how can we not trust him?

Searching Youtube one evening during lockdown I came across a beautiful peace of music by Margaret Rizza viz *Calm me, O Lord, as You calm the storm. Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm*. If you haven't come across it just put 'Margaret Rizza' into the Youtube search engine or Google and then sit quietly and listen.

Pauline
(see hymn 924)