



Peters Green News Sheet Issue No: 15

Sunday 21st June 2020

Hope

Genesis 21:8-21, Jeremiah 20:7-13, Romans 6:1b-11, Matthew 10:24-39

Thank you for inviting me to join you all once more from my home to yours. Hopefully, I'll be able to meet with you all in person soon. I think that we all realise that we are living in extremely challenging times. We see on the television and hear on the news, issues which disturb us in so many ways and it's often hard to distinguish between fact and points of view. Interviewers may seem biased and those being interviewed, defensive. What do we believe? How do we react?

They (whoever 'they' are) say that there's nothing new under the sun and I think today's readings show that. In each of the readings people – ordinary people – feel challenged and abandoned, often in fear of their lives.

In the Genesis reading, Hagar is cast out with her son, Ishmael. Hagar was sure that her son would die, but God showed her a well of water 'God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow' (v20). In the depths of her despair, God didn't abandon Hagar, but was there to give her practical support.

Jeremiah feels that he must speak out 'within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones' (v9), even though 'I have become a laughing stock all day long, everyone mocks me' (v7). He's so afraid, but he knows that God is with him.

Paul's letter to the Romans offers hope to those who believe and trust in Jesus 'if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.' (v8).

You can't help feeling sorry for the disciples in the reading from Matthew as Jesus outlined what they could expect as they went out on their mission to evangelise the world – no pay, hand to mouth living, endless journeying through hostile country among often hostile people. Abandoning family ties would have been shocking. BUT in Luke 12:6 Jesus speaks of five sparrows sold for two pennies, while in our Matthew reading two sparrows are sold for one penny. The person who spends two pennies gets an extra sparrow thrown in, as if it's worthless. The God who sees a tiny sparrow fall also cares about our trivia – even the numbers of hairs on our head.

In our troubled times, **God cares and gives us hope**, even if the future may not be quite as we imagined.

This weekend we are honouring the memory of Alban, a man living probably in the early third century in the Roman city of Verulamium. His story is well known and his statement 'I am Alban and I worship and adore the true and living God' led to him becoming the first British martyr. This story of an ordinary man, doing an extraordinary thing has endured and continues to inspire to this day.

Until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

With love, Gill

Lord of all hopefulness,
Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever child-like,
No cares can destroy,
Be there at our waking,
And give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
At the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled
At the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labors,
And give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts,
Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome,
Your arms to embrace,
Be there at our homing,
And give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord,
At the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment,
Whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping,
And give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,
At the end of the day.

