

3rd Week after Trinity: 3rd – 9th July 2022

Greetings from Eileen

Dear friends,

Peter-tide is most often the season adopted for the Ordinations of Deacons and Priests. It is my 10th year in ordained ministry, for which I say an immeasurable thank you to Brian. What a roller-coaster ride he's shared with me! We know we have each and together grown in faith and as disciples in Christ. On Saturday 2nd July, I assist those to be ordained priests at Durham Cathedral as the Deacon at their Ordination Service.



Taking up rural ministry is a joyful learning experience. Last weekend on Fun Day, as the Vicar I presented trophies and cups to winners of Gainford's races, including to family members of parishioners who attend our churches.



Zac follows in the Heslop sporting family tradition of his Grandparents Hilary and John who had been badminton and cricket champions respectively. Anna, whose Mum Christine is on St Mary's Gainford PCC, will be married in St Mary's Church next month. Katie plays the violin in St Mary's Band, next to multi-instrumentalist Mum Kathrine who chooses to play the Saxophone.

Gainford St Mary's is our focus this week as we hope many would come to our social event and fundraiser **'OPEN GARDENS'**. Well done to Sue and Geoff for their tireless and effective invitation to gardeners in the community: **Twelve gardens will be open on Sunday 10th July between 2pm and 5pm**. There are all kinds of gardens open: riverside gardens, a walled garden, surprising secret gardens, courtyards with wildlife and a giant fishpond, a garden with raised beds full of flowers and a quirky garden with a wildflower meadow. Some have vegetable beds and there are lots of ideas for your own garden. **For every visitor this would be £5 very well spent!**



On Sunday 17th July, our annual Blessing of Animals Service on Gainford's Green returns at the usual time of 10.45am with St Mary's Band in attendance. We are blessed with a generous space to welcome many animals – pets and companions, and even working animals that are comfortable out of their normal work environments.

Last week, an information panel board drawing attention to 'The Way of Life' Northern Saints Pilgrimage Trail appeared in front of St Mary's, Gainford beside the signpost with the Camino shell marker. We thank God for his continuous favour and pray that all who come to this place of pilgrimage encounter our loving God in Jesus Christ and go on their way, impassioned, and refreshed.



**This Sunday 3rd July 2022 join me at
9.30am, St Andrew's, Winston, Holy Communion
10.45am St Mary's, Gainford, Holy Communion**

God, the most holy and glorious Trinity is with us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Rev'd Canon Eileen Harrop

NOTICES

- † Please pray for **Esme Rose McLuckie**, who was **baptised on Sunday 26th June 2022**, for her parents Pete and Kim, and her Godparents Sarah, Michelle, Dean, and James.
- † **Praying for God's Mission in 'WIN & GAIN'**: Did you know that a prayer meeting is convened **every Tuesday evening from 7pm** to pray that we hear God's voice, seek His direction, and ask for help and provision for our churches' ministry and mission? The venue is either at Jen's, Rosalind's, or at St Mary's Church, but if you would like to know more or to join us, please contact Jen: jim.hindhaugh@btinternet.com who can add you to the weekly email on where to meet and on particular prayer items.
- † **Ukraine Refugee Accommodation Sponsors**: A small number of sponsors in Gainford and Winston are preparing to accommodate Ukrainians seeking temporary accommodation. We have formed a Support Group, who will have and share the latest information. If you would like to know more, please email Jill Starr: jillstarr@googlemail.com
- † **Advance notices:**
- † **Youth Saints and Creation Club** welcomes children and young people 8-12 year olds and 12 and above respectively 6.30 – 8pm **Thursday 14th July with Youth Bible Study** from 5.45pm to 6.30pm, at St Mary's Church, Gainford. New members are always welcome!
- † **Messy Church welcomes families and children of all ages on Sunday 24th July 3.30-5.30pm** at St Mary's Church, Gainford. We are pleased that this new energetic form of church is already a time of welcome and worship for families from Winston, Gainford, Darlington, Barnard Castle, neighbouring villages including some south of the river Tees.
- † **On Monday 18th July, ITV, 9pm, the Long Lost Family Special** filmed in St Mary's Church and on Gainford's green will be broadcast with Brenda Clayton talking about her grandfather Harry Miller. It is part of the story of the young WWI soldiers, who were found more than 100 years after they fell at Passchendaele.



Collect for 3rd Sunday after TRINITY

God our saviour,
look on this wounded world
in pity and in power;
hold us fast to your promises of peace
won for us by your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Post-Communion Prayer

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

The First Reading: Galatians 6:7-16

⁷ Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. ⁸ If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹ So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

¹¹ See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. ¹⁴ May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! ¹⁶ As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

The Gospel: Luke 10:1-11

¹ After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ² He said to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. ³ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ ⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’”

Sermon, 2nd Sunday after TRINITY: Rev’d Canon Eileen Harrop, 26th June 2022 (Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62) at St Andrew’s, Winston

In our first reading, we heard Paul’s words to the Christians of Galatia:

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence... For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’”

We are very familiar with that commandment – we remind ourselves every Sunday when we worship. You and I are commanded to love others *‘as yourself’*. But earlier this week, I was alerted to the need to take care of how we interpret this *‘single commandment’*. Unless we refer to Jesus, who gave this commandment, we risk exercising love according to our own judgement of what is love and loving. In John 15, Jesus makes it clear how this commandment is to be understood: *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”* We are to love ourselves as Jesus has loved us.

Paul says that, otherwise, each of us may take this commandment as *‘an opportunity for self-indulgence’*, saying to ourselves, *‘it is my choice, according to my judgement and my values, how I love my neighbour’*.

There is only one sure way to know how to love ourselves and our neighbours as Jesus loved us. We must know how Jesus treated himself and others. This may sound pedantic: to locate all the occasions when Jesus related to others, to study and reflect on them. But frankly, that is what is needed. How do we follow Jesus unless we truly watch and discern the ‘what, why and how’ of his thoughts, words, and deeds? It is all too tempting to think and say, *‘surely it must be loving when we do this or that’* without any reference to how Jesus would regard that situation, person, and circumstance. It is even more tempting to think, *‘God gave us minds to work things out for ourselves, and we have experiences that we have learnt from’... ‘so we don’t need to consider what Jesus would do.’* I’ve heard many people choose to follow what they have read in the newspapers, or seen on the soaps on TV, or heard on radio discussions and reflections.

There are countless scenarios and situations in the world that are presented and analysed non-stop by the media. Some people who do not trust digital media put their trust in well-crafted stories or biographies or other forms of literature. But by living in this way, we are at best cherry picking those examples that match our circumstances then feed our tendency to select those that affirm our judgement. So, we say, “*Of course, this is the way to do it*”. Whether it is how we reconcile a troubled relationship, confront a person who is unjust, or help someone living with distressing pain, the way we exercise love is either the way of the world or the way that we have worked out with the help of Jesus and the counsel of the Holy Spirit. To choose the way of the world, my friends, is taking a step each time down the slippery slope to being so confident in our own values, experience, and intellect that we presume that is following Jesus.

In our Gospel passage someone declares that he will follow Jesus: ‘*As they were going along the road, someone said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.*’ Jesus responds by posing several scenarios to help him think through his undertaking. Jesus may seem to be putting him off or boasting to his listeners the costly compromise or sacrifice of following him. But no, Jesus is doing the will of his Father. Jesus says to them and to us, if you follow me, you will be following the will of God the Father. And the very foundation of God’s will for Jesus is to love as God the Father loves.

So, Jesus tells those listening, that this involves being prepared to do without earthly comforts, to be found unacceptable in the eyes of society, and even down to the most difficult choices – forego long farewells with those whom you love. In my pastoral role, I have had deeply difficult conversations with loved ones of those whose life is ebbing away. In my native culture, it is even more difficult than it is in this country to consider the move to a nursing or care home of someone greatly loved. But following Jesus to love as he loved us, is to do what is in the best interest of those we love. Jesus went to the Cross because it gave us the opportunity to be saved from our sins and for our return to eternal life. Jesus focused on what it meant to love so completely that there was no looking back. No regrets.

There isn’t time to elaborate on this today. So let me say that this is where the presence and power of the Holy Spirit comes in. We cannot do this in our own strength. To love one another as Jesus has loved us, and in this context, love your neighbour as yourself, cannot be done without God’s help. Paul says: ‘*take care that you are not consumed by one another*’.

Our lives are nourished as we live by the Spirit, and the fruit of the Spirit will grow in us: ‘*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*’ All these qualities help us, without self-indulgence, to live by Jesus’ single commandment: ‘*love your neighbour as yourself.*’

Amen