

4th Week after Trinity: 10th – 16th July 2022

Greetings from Eileen

Dear friends,

What a week we've had as a country, as a nation. I suppose those more politically attuned than I am may have 'seen it coming' as we say. But within 48 hours we received the announcement of our Prime Minister's resignation after an unprecedented 50 resignations from members and officers of the government. The whole nation and perhaps others interested around the world have learnt the importance and power of moral integrity. It just isn't sufficient as a leader to accomplish any other thing or perhaps every other thing well in the absence, or casual treatment, of moral integrity. I have chosen to append the Sermon delivered by the honorary Ecumenical Canon at Southwark Cathedral, Rev'd Les Isaacs, at the Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, which informed the resignation of Health Secretary Sajid Javid. Quoting Rev'd George Pitcher (Premier Christianity):

"In the financial markets, there is a long-standing phrase used at times of economic turmoil and uncertainty for a shift in investor sentiment towards safer assets, such as gold. It's called a flight-to-quality. What we're witnessing currently, in what we might call the political markets, is a flight-to-integrity."

*Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out.*

Proverbs 10:9 (ESV)

*...for we aim at what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight
but also in the sight of man.*

2 Corinthians 8:21 (ESV)

Taking on public office carries responsibilities and accountability. Some leaders in public office may relish public exposure. But whether they desire exposure or not, they know what to expect. Public scrutiny comes with the office, and so too does honour, which requires honourable conduct in return. Our Houses of Parliament lead this Christian country: our monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, which is the established church of this nation. Senior Bishops sit as Lords Spiritual in the Upper House. Integrity and Honour are not optional.

How should we respond to this as Christians? Friends, we do as Jesus had done. The Gospels report on Jesus' reactions to those who fall short, and so we react with compassion and prayer. We may not be in position to speak to our outgoing Prime Minister in person or directly. But if we could, we would ask that he turns from his fallen ways, repent, and ask for God's help to live with integrity and honour.

Last week I was informed of my election (as one of 3 Minority Ethnic Priests) to sit in the House of Bishops as an Episcopal/Participant Observer. I meet in that house for the first time later this week.

**This Sunday 10th 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

- † **OPEN GARDENS:** Please support this great effort in Gainford by coming to visit the gardens opened this Sunday 10th July from 2pm. For £5 (children visit free), an afternoon of delight awaits. Please encourage family, friends, and neighbours to come!
- † **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 all neighbouring town and villages.
- † **Blessing of Animals Service on Gainford's Green Sunday 17th July 2022 10.45am:** All are welcome! Please bring picnic chairs or a rug to sit with your pet or animal. This short service is specially to bless our animal friends, children, and companions.
- † **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 4th Sunday after TRINITY

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Post-Communion Prayer

Eternal God,
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,
you have fed us at the table of life and hope:
teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,
that all the world may acknowledge
the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

The First Reading: Colossians 1:1-14

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

² To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³ In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷ This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. ¹¹ May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' ²⁶ He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' ²⁷ He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' ²⁸ And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?'

³⁰ Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend."

³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' ³⁷ He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

Sermon, Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, Westminster – Houses of Parliament, London: Rev'd Les Isaacs (founder and CEO of Ascension Trust, and pioneer of Street Pastors in the UK, honorary Ecumenical Canon, Southwark Cathedral), **7th July 2022**

In the last two years, it has felt as if we have hit a rock bottom in terms of grief, bereavement, discouragement and uncertainty.

All of us have been in it together in terms of the challenges we are facing during this global pandemic. A mother whom I know lost her son on one given day. On the next day, she lost her daughter. After five weeks of waiting before she could bury them, only five people could be present at that grave site. And yet, for the Church and for the Christian, the psalmist helps and encourages us. It says this: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." ([Psalm 23:4](#)).

For Christians, God is with us. But also, we are encouraged to have the mind of Jesus; seeing things as he sees things, recognising that, through our griefs, through our challenges, there is hope. We are called not only to have this mind of Jesus, but we are called to be servants of others daily. And especially during difficult times - these dark valley experiences when it most matters. Over the past two years, there have been thousands of men and women who have rolled up their sleeves and asked the question: "What can I do to help?"

It has been most encouraging as a church leader just to listen to people from all over the country, from the Church, who said: "What can I do to help?" I received an email from a Street Pastor management committee who said they had a 70-year-old man who was fit and well and was keen to get out and serve his community as a local street pastor. Christ has called us to follow him, but he's also called us to walk in humility as we seek to serve him and to live for him. And that's a challenge, as the Church and as Christians seek to serve in humility.

Humility is the absence of pride and the ability to be down-to-earth and modest under all circumstances. This is Jesus in his life. Jesus came into this world to serve; to serve us, to serve humanity. But Jesus also expects us, as the Church, to serve in humility. "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" ([Philippians 2:8](#)).

Right across the United Kingdom, men and women who are serving their community without prejudice demonstrate their concern and their passion for the common good of society. But there is a story behind every Christian person. And that story is the story of love; of how God loved them and how they desire to pour out and to show their gratitude for that love to others. A story of forgiveness; how Jesus forgave them of their sins and how they want to have compassion and reach out to people and demonstrate that they appreciate and value the forgiveness of God for their sins. The story of servitude and humility; the story of the Son of God who came into this world and died on the cross, and yet it's a story of Christ in every believer; the hope of glory. It's a story of compassion; the fact that God gives his people the capacity to be compassionate, not living for themselves but living for others and seeking to demonstrate that compassion for the weak and the poor, the marginalised and those who are in distress.

At the center of our lives is Jesus, and a desire to be like him and to fulfill his purpose here on earth. Many men and women are quietly demonstrating service, humbly and compassionately, for the common good of the community, of society, of their city and their nation.

But there's a challenge for us, whether we're politicians, whether we are church leaders, there's a challenge for us to work in a collaborative way. To work where we can work for the common good with everyone within our community, to bring hope. We recognise that as we work together, we are bringing hope but, equally, we recognise that we cannot do it on our own. I'm so glad to see so many parliamentarians here, coming with their local church leader, sitting together, eating together. And I pray that they are asking the question: "What can we do together in our constituency?" It's important that we understand that the God who loves us, he's willing to give us hope and to use us to *bring* hope.

The 2022 international conference on freedom of religion and belief begins today, with over 60 countries represented and hundreds of delegates. It reminds us that there are Christians, and others, across the world who are working with zeal and hope for the common good of *their* society. And there are those who have become victims of kidnapping.

Four months ago, I had someone in my home and we had lunch together. She was talking about her experience in her country - she was kidnapped twice - and the trauma and the pain it caused her and her family. She works with AIDS victims. I visited her country four years ago and saw the work she did with hundreds of women in terms of supporting them and educating them and giving them skills and gifts. Yet she became a victim of kidnapping, and because of the trauma, she has had to move home. Sometimes, she says, I feel like I'm living in fear. But yet the perfect love of Jesus casts out all fear, and gives her the strength and the ability to go on.

Why do we do what we do? We do it because God has empowered us to do it. Sometimes people find it very strange in terms of what Christians do. I was out one night in Brixton, at three o'clock in the morning, and a man spent half an hour telling me how much he disagreed with my religion; telling me that my religion was useless, telling me all the bad things that my religion had done. But after half an hour, it was raining, it was cold. After half an hour he says: "I don't like your religion. But I like what you're doing." He said: "All of you, come to my flat, come and have a cup of tea and a spliff." I said to him: "We'll come for the tea, but I'll take the spliff home to my wife!" (laughs). Sometimes people find it difficult to get their heads around the Church. But that's OK. Let them see our good works.

A woman of 79 years of age - a grandmother - trained as a street pastor. At the age of 79! I met her a few years later, in her 80s, and she'd just graduated as a street pastor school's pastor. This is because of the good news of Jesus and the fact that she seeks to have the mind of Jesus. She seeks to humble herself and be a servant of Jesus.

I want to encourage all of us today. I want to remind the Church: it's been difficult, but Christ has called us to be faithful. I want to remind all of us here today that Jesus, being found in the appearance of a man, humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. I want to remind us today that all of us have influence. All of us have the ability to influence and to make a difference. And we are called to serve. We are called to work together for the common good - not just for the party, not just for the denomination, but for humanity. My words of encouragement to us this morning: Give hope a chance. Let hope flourish as you seek to lead and as you seek to have influence and as you seek to exert your influence across the world, across the city, across our community. Let us recognise it's together we will make a difference. It's together the common good of our community would be realised. May the Lord help us as we continue to serve.