

The Sunday after The Ascension

Prayers, Readings, Reflection.

“Welcome to another short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin. For those who are able to follow it as written or listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



*Be still and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you,
before you and within you.*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world
and knows our every word and deed.
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:
Lord, have mercy.
All Lord, have mercy.

You bring pardon and peace to the broken in heart:
Christ, have mercy.
All Christ, have mercy.

You make one by your Spirit the torn and divided:
Lord, have mercy.
All Lord, have mercy.

God promises us a place with him for ever and he has
raised us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. May we
know his forgiveness and peace and the freedom to serve
him in newness of life.
All Amen

The Collect for the day

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone
before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Acts of the Apostles. 1.15–17,21–26

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, ¹⁶'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— ¹⁷for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.'

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.' ²³So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Reflection

I am often asked why I wanted to become a priest. I have been asked by friends and bishops; by therapists and hairdressers. I have been asked with a heavy dose of scepticism and I have been asked with a genuine sense of curiosity. People are (perhaps rightly) intrigued to know why someone would choose this path in life.

I have a handful of go-to answers. 'My dad was a priest, so I knew what was involved.' 'I met a great many good priests who inspired me to be like them.' 'I thought I might be quite good at it, or at least not terrible.' There's a kernel of truth in each of these answers, and if I'm being honest the call to the priesthood can rarely be traced back to one key moment – it's a coming together of a host of factors that slowly but surely shape one's path in life.

Sometimes – if I'm feeling brave – I'll tell the story of the time I followed a particular news story. It was 10 years ago this July when a white-supremacist gunman went on the rampage in Norway, killing scores of young students on the small island of Utoya. That evening I was reading a blog written by a survivor of the days ordeal, she was a young Muslim girl who had swam off the Island in terror, been picked up by a passing boat and taken to shore. In her trauma she had been met by police and paramedics and members of the civil authorities, before being taken to a nearby hotel. In the lobby of the hotel, she says, she then 'met a priest and it was good'.

Those few words struck a chord in me. 'I met a priest, and it was good'. She told us nothing more. It was simply the presence of the priest, in that moment, that communicated to her a sense of being seen, being known, being abided with. No words or prayers or verses from scripture; no ritual or ceremony; just a calm presence in a sea of troubles.

The chord that was struck in me has echoed ever since. When I feel overwhelmed or unsure of what God has called me to do, I remember that story and I am reminded that God has not called me to 'do' but simply to 'be'. To be present, as a priest, in the world.

Matthias and Barsabbas may have felt a similar way. In the traumatic wake of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, these two friends of the community were nominated to replace Judas, the one who betrayed their friend and Lord. To join the twelve and lay the foundations of the church of Jesus Christ. I can sense their fear and trembling today. Lined up before the crowd, all eyes on them, and who will be the one to be picked?

Today and in the coming weeks we will be asked to affirm people in our own community who have been nominated to take offices in the church – Churchwardens and Almoners, Synod reps and Treasurers – each of them has responded to God's call in their life, and I don't doubt that some of them will be feeling the odd twinge of apprehension and doubt. What does God want me to do in this role?

Well let's notice what Peter says. There are only two qualifications to be considered for those who would become disciples: The person needed to be an eyewitness (one who sees) to Jesus' ministry from the beginning, and they needed to be willing to become a witness (one who speaks) of Jesus' resurrection to the world. There is no mention of personal holiness or wisdom, or even having a good reputation among the disciples. They are simply to be people who see Jesus, and people who speak of Jesus.

You can have the most comprehensive and convoluted job description in the world, but when it comes down to it, these are the two things that really matter. Will you see Jesus – in the rows and columns of the accounts? Will you see Jesus – in the people of this church family and community? Will you see Jesus – in the wider

Deanery and diocesan family to which we belong? Will you see Jesus?

And will you speak of Jesus – as we plan our budgets for the coming years? Will you speak of Jesus – as we plan our worship and our fellowship? Will you speak of Jesus – as a parish, as a deanery as a global church?

To see and to speak. That is all. Those whom we appoint and affirm will bring a wealth of talents, experience and passion, and thank the Lord for that. But it is from our seeing and speaking of Jesus that all the rest must flow.

So why did I want to become a priest? The truth is very simple. I saw Jesus moving in my life and calling me to speak of his love to the world. Some days I get it wrong. Some days I get it right. Every day I start afresh and ask myself, 'where will I see Jesus today'.
Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Pray for one another – those in our church community

Pray for the Parish, the Island and the World

Pray for the sick, the isolated, the anxious and depressed

Pray for the dying, and those who mourn

Pray for yourselves, and for your own needs

Lord, come to bless us
All and fill us with your Spirit

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father

**All Accept these prayers
for the sake of your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Peace

God has made us one in Christ.
He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come,
has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Alleluia.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All **and also with you.**

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us
All **Our Father**
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from
evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
For ever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
through the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always

All **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!
All **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**