

ParishNews



Blessed Sacrament Parish Heavitree Exeter

10 May 2020. Fifth Sunday of Easter. Year A



The **WAY** *The* **TRUTH** *The* **LIFE**

In today's Gospel we continue to explore the meaning of baptism, of membership of the Church, of living a life which has been immersed in the life and death of Jesus Christ: in other words, we continue our 'Mystagogy' - our training in the mystery of Baptism and the other Sacraments. We hear more about 'who Jesus is', with another 'I am' statement: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life'. We are baptised into his way, his truth and his life. We hear about the earliest community struggling with the life they are called to by baptism, and Peter again reminds us that baptism builds us into a 'spiritual house' with Jesus as our cornerstone. The mystery of the Church is clearly before us today: the Church is the community of those baptised in Christ, the pilgrim people walking with Christ (who has shown us the Father) to the place he has prepared for us. Today's reading can perhaps make us think a little more about how we form part of this 'spiritual house', the Church, as we journey to the Father.

Are you okay?

It's a question many of us will have either said or heard asked over the years and especially during the past weeks. I've sometimes used it and heard it used almost as a throwaway line, perhaps not too bothered about the reply, but today it reflects a genuine concern for our sisters and brothers; are you really okay? It's not just a question about the other person's physical health, but seems to encompass the whole person, physical, emotional and spiritual. And the reply 'yes I'm okay' doesn't necessarily imply 'I'm on top of the world' or 'I'm in the depths of despair'; it seems to express something about coping, about accepting the challenges and getting through, about ploughing on even though the future is uncertain. I'm deeply grateful to those of you who are regularly asking the question on behalf of the parish, ringing around some of our more vulnerable friends to see if they 'are okay'.

In today's Gospel Jesus reassures us with the beautiful words: 'Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid, trust in God still and trust in me.' I've proclaimed these words so many times in my ministry as a priest, very often at funerals, that finally, after 20 years, I'm beginning to hear them! Believing them may take another 20! But I do find them profoundly reassuring.

One of the things I've heard many times in the confessional (don't worry I'm not going to name names!) is: 'I don't trust God enough'. You may have said it or thought it yourself. What is it to trust God? The greatest human relationships are based on trust; friendship, marriage, even business relations. To trust is about giving to the other in the relationship that which you can't, or don't need to, do anything about yourself. And once that has been given away to avoid the temptation to take it back. It's the same in our

relationship with God. When he asks us to trust him he wants us to give him, not just our worries or anxieties, our hopes and our dreams but every bit of ourselves, to place ourselves in his hands, to LET GO and LET GOD.

One of the most challenging things about the situation we are in at present is that we are largely powerless to do anything about it. We like to be in control, to be able to determine our present and our future. Someone once told me (it's an old joke) that to really make God laugh all we have to do is tell him our plans! We are uncertain of what's going to happen, in our personal lives, as a parish, in the world. But he already knows.

So God encourages us to let go and trust. And when we do our hearts are stilled and our fears melt away. Trusting in God is not a fantasy, it is responding to his desire for us to have life and to live it fully. As a Church we are preparing to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Let's pray that the Spirit will help us all in the coming days and weeks to trust, to hope and to love.

One of the attachments sent with this week's newsletter is a beautiful reflection 'You're okay' on God's constant and powerful love for each of us. It's contained within the 'Prayers' document and I recommend you have a read.

LET GO and LET GOD! Stay safe, keep well.

Fr Jonathan

Alpha online

We are running the well-known Alpha course online! Evenings where you can get together with existing friends (and new ones!), watch films exploring life and discuss those big questions about faith and God. So put the kettle on and come along and join us! It's a fantastic way to connect when we can't meet in person. Our Alpha will begin Tuesday 19 May at 7.30pm. Each Alpha session will include a short film and a chat where you can share your thoughts within an online small group. There's no pressure and no charge! Simply contact us with your email address and we will get back to you with all the details. Email us with 'Alpha' in the subject heading: exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk. We hope to see you there!

Keep in touch

Please see the parish Facebook page **Blessed Sacrament Exeter** www.facebook.com/pg/BlessedSacramentExeter/posts/ and the parish website blessedsacrament.org.uk for up to date information and spiritual support.

Parish finances

Thank you so much to those of you who have enquired about setting up a weekly or monthly standing order so we can continue to pay the bills. This is very much appreciated. In these troubling times it is comforting to know how much people care about our beloved parish. You may wish to consider making your offering to the church by monthly standing order. If you would like to do so you can set this up quite easily. Please email the parish office at exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk and the details that you need can be sent to you. For those parishioners who wish to continue to make weekly donations in cash, if possible, please put the usual amount to one side each week and bring the total when we are finally able to come together again. We understand that during these difficult times, other people may be buying your essentials and you therefore need to keep your cash available to pay these kind volunteers, so please feel free to post a cheque (made payable to PRCDTR Heavitree RC Parish) to the Presbytery if this is easier. If neither of these options are suitable for you, please put aside your weekly cash offerings and/or gift aid envelopes until Masses resume. If you are tax payer, you can gift aid your offerings and a gift aid form for you to complete and return to the parish office can also be sent to you.

Parish News by Post

Some parishioners will not have email and therefore will not be receiving these weekly updates. If you know of anyone who would like to receive the newsletter by post, please could you let me know their address (with their permission, of course!) and we will print and post the newsletter out to them each week exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk or call Lesley on 07712 216724

Wednesday Word is now online!

Our weekly Wednesday Word continues to successfully run as an online group every Wednesday afternoon at 2.00pm. If you would like to join a group, please contact Maria at Exeter-pastoral-assistant@prcdtr.org.uk. She can add you to a group and/or support you with learning how to participate using the Zoom video conferencing app. We've had many parishioners successfully join who were new to 'zoom' so be brave and get in touch!

CAFOD Emergency Appeal

CAFOD has launched a coronavirus emergency appeal. Coronavirus (Covid-19) has now spread worldwide, with confirmed cases in many countries where CAFOD works. The effects of coronavirus on developing countries are likely to be devastating. Many countries have very weak healthcare systems and will not be able to cope. Families without enough to eat and without access to clean water, possibly living with other diseases, will be particularly vulnerable to coronavirus. It is not just a public health emergency. Many of the world's most vulnerable people will lose their jobs and be unable to support their families. The poorest and most marginalised communities, working hard to transform their lives, will be pushed further into poverty. CAFOD is adapting its programmes to help manage the risk of coronavirus in communities and working with local Church aid agencies on the frontline of this crisis. They are already working to get food to where it is needed most; to improve hygiene, handwashing and sanitation in communities and households; producing radio messages, posters and leaflets in local languages on risks and prevention; and training community volunteers to carry out awareness campaigns. In order to continue protecting and improving the lives of those in poor communities, your prayers and gifts are needed now more than ever. While we are not able to hold collections in our church, you can donate at cafod.org.uk/coronavirusappeal

They are also running a series of webinars and meetings which will give people a chance to meet Cafod directors and overseas staff and to come together and pray as a community. You can access all these events at cafod.org.uk/onlinetalks There is also a petition to sign at cafod.org.uk/coronavirus to ask the UK government to ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalised people are the priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home.



Urafiki News

People in Yala are starving so Urafiki has increased its feeding activities. Food is distributed using our student volunteers – so we can be confident that it gets to the people who need it most. It costs about £4 per week to feed a family. By late June we hope that there will food available from the harvest- in the meantime it's up to us. 100% of whatever is raised will go to the team in Kenya. Nothing is deducted here. The money goes straight to Yala to purchase much needed food. Thank you for whatever you are able to donate through www.urafiki.org.uk or contact Imelda Wightman at imelda.wightman@gmail.com

Laudato Si' Week 5th Anniversary – 16-24 May 2020

This year is the 5th Anniversary of Laudato Si' which tells us that "everything is connected" and tragically, the current health catastrophe has much in common with the ecological catastrophe. Both are global emergencies that will affect many people, both directly and indirectly. Despite the current situation, there are still lots of ways we can take action to mark this anniversary, sharing the common prayer and celebrating what we have achieved in our homes, schools and parishes. CAFOD and Caritas Plymouth have produced a summary of resources for anyone interested in exploring further the message of Laudato Si'. A note will be posted on the Plymouth Diocese website next week. During the week itself we will be sharing reflections and examples of how our Diocese is taking action via our Diocesan Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/plymouthdiocese/>

Into your hands, Lord...

Please also pray for the repose of the soul of Peter Budd and Fr Cadoc Leighton OPrem, parish priest of Camborne and Redruth who have recently died.

Please also pray for the repose of the soul of Tony Lehain, brother in law of Seb Mills. Tony died suddenly on Friday morning and leaves a wife, Lauren and five children. He was only 33. If you can help in a more practical way there is a justgiving page to which you might like to contribute:

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/inmemorytonylehain?utm_term=nGvrDVneN

The Bishops of England and Wales have produced a form of service to be used by those who are prevented from attending a funeral and a copy is attached.

Lourdes Pilgrimage 2020/2021

The Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes has been cancelled this year. The dates for 2021 are 30th July-5th August. Hopefully all pilgrims who have already booked will be able to join us next year, deposits will be carried forward. If you are unable to join us next year your deposit will of course be refunded. Joe Walsh Tours will send individual explanatory letters to each pilgrim very soon

Exeter Foodbank

Exeter Foodbank has been very busy helping many more people than usual in these challenging times. The church closure means we cannot collect any offerings here but these can still be donated at supermarkets. At the moment they are particularly short of: meat – tins, rice – 500g/1kg, coffee – instant, sponge puddings, jams & spreads. For anyone restricted to their house it is also possible to donate money to the Exeter Foodbank via the following link: <https://exeter.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-money/> If you are in need of further support Exeter Foodbank has also issued more information. See attachment - Foodbank Covid Signposting.

Lourdes Intentions

It has been brought to our attention that although Lourdes is shut off from pilgrims, there are constant prayers, Masses, rosaries, candles lit etc., offered for the sick and the world by the chaplains there. Petitions and intentions can be sent by post directly to the Sanctuary at Lourdes, should anyone wish. If anyone would like to send petitions, without noting each request, just the name of the person asking would be enough (after all Our Lady will know the specific wish), they can do that - otherwise if they would like to give me their name to Sheelah Gardner Thorpe she will send one letter with names only to include all petitions. We are approaching the time we would be going to Lourdes on pilgrimage, (at the end of May), but this year the petitions can get there by post! Please send any names via the parish office exeter-heavtree@prcdtr.org.uk and they will be passed to Sheelah.

Christian Aid Week 10-16 May

Each year church-goers collect money in their neighbourhoods for Christian Aid Week, in what has been described as the largest single act of Christian witness each year. This year, though, there will be no red envelopes through doors, but the need is greater than ever before as countries already struggling with poverty and the effects of climate change now try to cope with coronavirus as well. So, Christian Aid Week is moving online! Read more, here: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

VE Day

On Friday 8 May we remembered the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War 2. Let us never ever forget as well the 75 million people who were killed in that conflict. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Let us continue to pray for peace in our world.

Pope's May Intention

We pray that deacons, faithful to their service of the Word and the poor, may be an invigorating symbol for the entire church. See also <https://thepopevideo.org>

Pope Francis on mercy...

As we continue our earthly pilgrimage, if we learn to bear each other's burdens and to exchange the rich patrimony of our respective traditions, then we will see more clearly that what unites us is greater than what divides us.

The Pope tweets...

Prayer is the breath of faith. It is like a cry that comes forth from the heart of the believer and is entrusted to God. Faith is having two hands raised and a voice that cries out to implore the gift of salvation.

What has happened to the Sunday Obligation?

The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is suspended at the moment.

Mass intentions

Fr Jonathan is celebrating Mass each day and if you would like a Mass said for a particular intention, for someone who is ill or a loved one who has died, in thanksgiving for an answer to prayer or perhaps something personal please contact Lesley by email exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk or on 07712 216724 who will be able to help you find a date. It is traditional to make an offering at the same time. This is simply what you can afford and would like to give. To comply with GDPR rules we must have the permission of the person named if it is to be made public unless they are deceased.

SOS - let us know if you need help

Please let us know via the parish email or the parish phone number 01392 274724 if there is any way we can provide practical support for you and your families in the coming days and weeks. We have a team of volunteers who can be contacted if you, or someone you know are in self-isolation and need food, medication or a friendly chat.

Month of May – Praying the Rosary

May is the month traditionally dedicated to Our Blessed Mother, Mary. It has been traditional in the Church to pray the Rosary particularly in this month. We fly to her patronage and love at this time of the pandemic and ask her intercession. The Rosary can be prayed individually or as a family. What a wonderful time to turn to Our Lady as a family and pray for our community and our world.

Prayers of Hope - every Sunday

During the Coronavirus crisis thousands of Christians across Britain are praying together at 7.00pm every Sunday evening. This began on Sunday 22 March after the Presidents of Churches Together in England issued a joint call to prayer. The response was phenomenal. St Paul tells us to pray continually. However, it helps to know that others are also praying at a specific time, so we encourage you to pray at 7.00pm on Sunday evening.

Exeter Prays

Hundreds - possibly thousands - of people also met recently online on Sunday 26 April for the latest of several 'Exeter Prays' events. If you're on Facebook, you can watch it on catch up, here: https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1089933801388175&id=425354644272033 We are planning for Exeter Prays to go ahead again on Sunday 17 May again at 8.00pm. This will tie into the Thy Kingdom Come Week (<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>) and two weeks later there will be a much wider TKC prayer time on Pentecost Sunday. Details to be confirmed.

Getting in Touch with Patients in the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital

The Chaplaincy Team are very aware that, with visiting restrictions, it is much harder to get messages of love and prayer through to friends and other parishioners in hospital. So, please leave a message on 01392 402024 and one of the Chaplaincy team will aim to write your message onto a card and deliver it to the patient. Simply say your name and contact number, the full name of the patient (and the ward they are on, if you know it) and a message you wish to be written in the card.

Are you able to help?

If you are not having to self-isolate, Devon County Council and our local NHS need temporary and permanent workers now to fill a variety of roles including healthcare assistants, cleaners, chefs, security staff, and admin staff, with shifts available on weekdays, weekends, and evenings. More info at <https://www.proudtocaredevon.org.uk/> Similarly, but for volunteering, Exeter Community Wellbeing is the local hub for joining the fight against Covid-19. Get advice, training and find a role for yourself, here: <https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/community-safety/coronavirus/exeter-community-wellbeing/> Throughout history, Christians have answered the call to respond to the needs of others, and the Covid crisis is no different.

Sunday Mass Blessed Sacrament YouTube channel

As well as the regular Sunday Mass posted on the YouTube channel we are also posting films which appeal to families and young people. Maria, our pastoral assistant, Erik our parish youth worker, and some of the youngsters in our parish have all made films which they hope will engage you with your faith in a new way. Check them out at www.youtube.com/c/BlessedSacramentExeter

Children's Liturgy Stars

The recent Children's liturgy films produced by and starring the Gill sisters have made the headlines! The story recently featured on Radio Exe's news bulletin and on Radio Devon on Sunday Ellen and Fr Jonathan were interviewed on the Sunday Morning programme. So thank you girls for all your hard work and enthusiasm. We are always excited to see what joy you will bring us on Sunday morning. And a big thank you to Mum and Dad, Julia and Nick for your inspiration and guidance. The girls' films can be viewed on the parish YouTube channel.

Diocesan YouTube channel

Bishop Mark is live streaming Mass each day at 11.00am and afternoon prayer at 4.30pm on the following channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UC8KUEwsXFK3VBLEfn4H1tBw www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk

Online Masses in Polish

These are the Masses from Jasna Góra: Mass stream: <https://jasnagora.pl/pl/media/na-zywo/kaplica-matki-bozej/> Mass times: <https://jasnagora.pl/pl/dla-pielgrzymow/program-dnia/>

The Word

SUNDAY 10 MAY *Fifth Sunday of Easter*

FIRST READING

Acts 6:1-7

They elected seven men full of the Holy Spirit.

About this time, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenists made a complaint against the Hebrews: in the daily distribution their own widows were being overlooked. So the Twelve called a full meeting of the disciples and addressed them, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God so as to give out food; you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom; we will hand over this duty to them, and continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.' The whole assembly approved of this proposal and elected Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus of Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. The word of the Lord continued to spread: the number of disciples in Jerusalem was greatly increased, and a large group of priests made their submission to the faith.

PSALM

May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.

Ring out your joy to the Lord, O you just;
for praise is fitting for loyal hearts.
Give thanks to the Lord upon the harp,
with a ten-stringed lute sing him songs R

For the word of the Lord is faithful
and all his works to be trusted.
The Lord loves justice and right
and fills the earth with his love R

The Lord looks on those who revere him,
on those who hope in his love,
to rescue their souls from death,
to keep them alive in famine R

SECOND READING

1 Peter 2:4-9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.

The Lord is the living stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him; set yourselves close to him so that you too, the holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices which Jesus Christ has made acceptable to God, may be living stones making a spiritual house. As scripture says: *See how I lay in Zion a precious cornerstone that I have chosen and the man who rests his trust on it will not be disappointed.* That means that for you who are believers, it is precious; but for unbelievers, the stone rejected by the builders has proved to be the keystone, a stone to stumble over, a rock to bring men down. They stumble over it because they do not believe in the word; it was the fate in store for them.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.

GOSPEL

John 14:1-12

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?' Jesus said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.' Philip said, 'Lord, let us see the Father and then we shall be satisfied.' 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip,' said Jesus to him 'and you still do not know me? 'To have seen me is to have seen the Father, so how can you say, "Let us see the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak as from myself: it is the Father, living in me, who is doing this work. You must believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; believe it on the evidence of this work, if for no other reason. I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works, because I am going to the Father.'

SUNDAY 17 MAY *Sixth Sunday of Easter*

FIRST READING

Acts 8:5-8.14-17

They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Psalm Response

Cry out with joy to God all the earth.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:15-18

In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

GOSPEL

John 14:15-21

I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.

Mass Intentions

SUNDAY 10 MAY – Fifth Sunday of Easter

People of the Parish

Monday 11 May – Easter weekday

Tuesday 12 May – Easter weekday

Wednesday 13 May – Easter weekday

Thursday 14 May – St Matthias - Apostle

Friday 15 May – Easter weekday

Stephen Bemrose RIP

Saturday 16 May – Easter weekday

Kathleen Jenkinson RIP

SUNDAY 17 May – Sixth Sunday of Easter

People of the parish

Monday 18 May – Easter weekday

Tuesday 19 May – Easter weekday

Wednesday 20 May – Easter weekday

Thursday 21 May – The Ascension of the Lord

Friday 22 May – St Rita of Casia

Saturday 23 May – Easter weekday

SUNDAY 24 May – Seventh Sunday of Easter

People of the Parish

Attachments:

Look for children

'Prayers' includes:

You're okay

A Coronavirus Prayer

Making a Spiritual Communion

When a funeral cannot be attended

'Various' includes:

Message from Metropolitan Archbishops

Heavitree Community Builder May Update

Support Resources from Exeter Foodbank

Laudato Si Anniversary Celebrations

Family Faith Resources