



Parish Mission Statement

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind...and your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22:37-38

Sunday Podcasts

of each Sunday Morning Service are available after the service on YouTube.

A time to speak

Parish Podcast on the YouTube channel. The address for both is at the bottom of the page.

Never underestimate the power of prayer

"God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces of against evil"
- E.M. Bounds

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."
Martin Luther

"Seven days without prayer makes one weak."

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There is a moving scene in the movie Dr. Zhivago where the Comrade General is talking with Tanya about a traumatic experience in her childhood. He asks her, "How did you come to be lost?" She replies, "Well, I was just lost." But he persists and asks again, "No, how did you come to be lost?" Tanya doesn't want to say, but finally gives another cursory explanation: "I was just lost. My father and I were running through the city and it was on fire. The revolution had come and we were trying to escape and I was lost." The Comrade General kept pressing: "How did you come to be lost?" She still didn't want to say, but finally blurted out: "We were running through the city and my father let go of my hand and I was lost." Then she added plaintively, "He let go." This is what she didn't want to say. The Comrade General said, "This is what I've been trying to tell you, Tanya. Komarov was not your real father. Zhivago is your real father and I can promise you, Tanya, that if this man had been there, your real father, he would never have let go of your hand."

Our calling as Christians to tell people what their real Father is like. The message that we have to give to the world is that they are lost only because the false gods they were trusting in let them go and let them down because they were not their real Father. Their real Father would never let go of their hand. I think that Jesus, in the story of the prodigal son for instance, was saying that there are many people who are like Tanya in Dr. Zhivago. They got lost, not because of something that was their fault, but they became helpless and harassed when the world let go of them. They are wandering and simply need to be found. That is our calling as a Church, with Jesus, to seek and save the lost, and reunite them with their real Father. God.

God bless, and keep safe, Mark

Five Questions

1. What is your name? David Christopher Morton.
2. Where were you born? Secunderabad, India, in 1943.
3. What is your earliest memory of Church? When I was young and first remember going to church, my father was a prison chaplain, so he was not around on Sunday mornings. He was "in prison" as he jokingly said. On Sunday evenings, when required, he helped local parishes by conducting evensong in churches around Wakefield. He often took me. I felt very proud because congregations made a fuss of visiting clergy and I thought he was very important. I went with my mother to Wakefield Cathedral on Sunday mornings. The music and singing were good, and the congregations seemed large. However, Mattins with its long canticles (especially the Te Deum), and Communion (the old Book of Common Prayer and lots of kneeling) were far less appealing than Dad, the welcoming congregation, and the brief more reassuring chants of evensong, like the Nunc Dimittis. On occasions the litany was intoned. It was haunting, even though I did not have a full grasp of all the bad things from which we were asking to be delivered ... "plague, pestilence" ... and Covid?
4. When did the Christian faith become important to you? It always was. At first in a childish way, maturing as I grew up. Later on, I questioned things and still do, but beliefs that can stand up to questioning are perhaps ultimately stronger than unquestioned ones. St Thomas?
5. What is your favourite Bible verse/s and why? As a lawyer, Matthew 22: 37-40; the two commandments, ending with "on these two laws hang all the laws and prophets". Appropriately our parish mission statement. More emotionally and defiantly, the entire Christmas Gospel (John 1: 1-14), but, especially in troubled times, verses 3 and 4. "In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not". Again, the Authorised Version for its vocabulary.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE ON THE PARISH WEBSITE:

www.stjameswanssea.org.uk

St. James Sunday Services on YouTube are available here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNVea6r8mEr_KnOkSv6qQA/

Weep Not at Nain

The following poem—whose author I have not been able to trace—is a great example of the power of poetry to paint a picture. It is based on Luke 7:11-17 (see below) where Jesus raises a widow's only son from the dead.

Now it happened, the day after, that (Jesus) went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, "God has visited His people." And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.
Luke 7:11-17 NKJV

Here's the poem:

Cold and still and lifeless ill lying
On the bier. So strange to see the boy
Whose jest and winsome dreams once en-joyed
The heart of an old mother, now ill, crying.

The whole town and bridge club, beauty shop, baking crew and ladies' guild
Were shocked at this injustice: how could God
Be cruel if He were so mighty: isn't it odd
That goodness gets harder once youth is stilled.

They all came out to weep at the gates of Nain
With their widow friend, joyless, boyless, bereft
Of welfare, without food and clothing and shelter left:
But ask her, if you dare: she cares only for ancient pain.

Ancient pain at the city of Nain and everywhere:
For some, like this, the shame is especially clear
When the poor and the halt are more burdened with tears;
But death for the unburdened is more than even they can bear.

The Son of Man came to Nain for the pall-bearing
Of all the biers of man, every procession
He stills with the God-breath of compassion:
"Weep not," Nain heard the Voice of the Ages, merely caring.

Young man from your coffin do quickly arise
And take your old mother dearly home.
Tell her you're fine from the Master of Time, the Stone
Rolled away, He'll dry every tear from her eyes.

The power of Praise

"The very act of praise releases the power of God into a set of circumstances and enables God to change them if this is His design... I have come to believe that the prayer of praise is the highest form of communication with God, and one that always releases a great deal of power into our lives." (Merlin Carothers)

First Sunday before Lent

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before He suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive His glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with Him and be changed into His likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Readings

Readings 2 Kings 2.1-12
Psalm 50.1-6
2 Corinthians 4.3-6
Mark 9.2-9

The Deity of Jesus

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to". *C.S.Lewis*

My Two Favourites (Vicar)

"If Christians spent as much time praying as they do grumbling, they would soon have nothing to grumble about."
Anonymous

"If the church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has."

Contact information

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The Parish Website can be found at: www.stjameswanssea.org.uk