

Dear all

Today was the final day of the Zoomed Diocesan Clergy Conference. In his opening reflection, our area bishop, Bishop Nicholas, talked about the importance of attending to and facing the future – what it may be like. He said that we have an opportunity to reflect, and to get rid of what has got in our way in the past. He said that we need to act differently with each other, and with the world around. We need to walk more softly in the world.

He also talked of the need for solidarity. There is a temptation to scapegoat and to ‘other’ other people (i.e. to identify them by what we are not, and to reject them because of that). We must resist the pressure to pull apart, to point the finger. He continued that we must challenge injustice and proclaim the Kingdom of God – but we must do it together. This requires honesty and self-awareness, confession and forgiveness, and a desire for reconciliation.

I find this a very difficult dilemma. I have talked before about the need for the church to be prophetic. Only this morning I was reading an article which accused the church (and specifically the Church of England) of being so concerned to remain united that it brushed issues of justice under the carpet. These, the article suggested, have come back to haunt us in the unresolved tensions, institutional racism and homophobia/transphobia that bedevil our church today, as well as its somewhat lamentable role (at least in the past) in climate change and colonialism. It is a very difficult line to walk between responding to Jesus’ prayer that we should be as one, and yet also to be the voice of/for the marginalised and the down-trodden. And this is particularly pertinent, both in this coronavirus pandemic, and in the whole Black Lives Matter campaign, where we might want to call out bad practice and leadership, both in the church and in society.

Bishop Rob Gillion, Assistant Bishop in Lincoln, talked about using our imagination. He encouraged us to imagine a post-Covid world, and to inhabit that world. That is what the bible calls having a vision. It was an encouragement for us here in Deeping St James to imagine what the Priory Church might be like – how we may seek to serve our parish community now and in the future.

Bishop Rob shared a video he has made. He was formerly an actor, who took the recent confirmation at Deeping St Nicholas. He imagines what might happen if Jesus visited his church...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpM24kEitBA&feature=youtu.be>

**Today, in 325AD**, Bishop Hosius, a delegate at the Council of Nicea, announced the newly written Nicene Creed. This creed, or statement of belief, was designed to counter the theologian Arius, who taught that "there was a time when the Son was not," the creed describes Christ as "God from very God, begotten not made". It is the creed that we use in our Communion service, as it particularly focuses on the person of Jesus Christ, who is the focus of the Eucharist – as we celebrate the bread and wine as His body and blood broken and shed for us. Morning and Evening Prayer, by contrast, use the Apostles Creed, which lists, almost in bullet points, the main points of belief inherited from the teachings of the apostles – with far less detail about the Son.

The text for the [Communion service](#) this weekend (and all that follow) is the same as I attached to my message last week. I attach it again, in case you didn’t get it or keep it. The text can also be found at the following link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/holy-communion#mm7c2>

The hymns are as follows – three of them have the words on the videos. The [words are attached](#) for those who will be following the hymns on the Sunday live broadcast, and for everyone for the words of the 3<sup>rd</sup> hymn.

I come with joy (with lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpBs0b8Nnzs>

Take my life and let it be (with lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sss-g50Dw1Q>

Christ is the one who calls

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZCksFjfFOBk>

Lord for the years (with lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkTrFQLy6js>

Many years ago, there was a rather scurrilous (but very funny!) website that, amongst other things, had a list of spoof hymn titles for the not very triumphantly living Christian. One of the titles was 'Take my wife, and let me be'! I can't forget it when we sing the hymn – and neither will you too now! A shame, as it is a lovely hymn of commitment, especially with the tune by Mozart (I've always wondered why a tune by Mozart would be called Nottingham. Anyone know?).

Don't forget our Rose & Sweet Pea show website. You can log in and enter competitions (by photo!) or take part in the raffle – all of which raises invaluable funds for the church. The link is <https://rose-and-sweet-pea-show.wishpondpages.com/>

Also don't forget that the church is now open for private prayer Monday, Wednesday & Saturday 10.00am-3.00pm. Please follow guidelines clearly posted, and let me know if there are any issues.



Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark