



WELCOME TO ST PETER'S ASH



THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AT ST PETER'S IS CALLED TO CELEBRATE, LIVE AND REFLECT THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

14th JUNE 2020

TRINITY 1

READINGS FOR TODAY

Exodus 19 v 2 – 8a
Romans 5 v 1 - 8
Matthew 9 v 35 to 10 v 23

PARISH OFFICE: Closed until further notice.
TEL:01252 331161: e- mail: office@saint-peters-ash.org.uk
BOOKINGS OF WEDDINGS & BAPTISMS – 01252 321517
WEBSITE: www.saint-peters-ash.org.uk



Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and sent them out.

COLLECT FOR TRINITY 1

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

DON'T FORGET OUR ST PETER'S PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like emergency prayer for yourself or somebody else please phone: 01252 322292 or 01252 323037 – this is a confidential service.

There is a free national phone line 'Daily Hope' that offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services. Available 24 hours a day on **0800 804 8044**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR TREASURER SHEILA TAYLOR

I have had many questions about the "envelope" giving, what should you do with it? If you would like to make payment to the PCC, bank details are as follows:

Bank: Natwest Bank Plc. 30 Wellington Street, Aldershot. GU11 1AE
Account Name: PCC of St Peter's, Ash
Account Number: 50140256
Sort Code: 60 01 08

Please make sure you include your name.

Or you could write a cheque and send it to me, enclosing one of the weekly envelopes. Send your cheque to: Father Keith, The Rectory, Ash Church Road, Ash, Surrey. GU12 6LU Thank you on behalf of the PCC and keep safe and keep well.

BIBLE STUDY

Carol and I are planning to start a Bible study on 'Great Prayers of the Bible'. There will be seven weekly sessions, online, using Zoom, starting on Tuesday 7th July 7 – 30 pm to 8 – 30 pm. Numbers will be limited to 12 participants, first come first served. If there is greater demand we will look into having other sessions. We will be using a course book priced at £3 - 20 available from Carol – please e-mail her or phone her on 313239.

If you haven't got internet access you can still do the course using the book by yourself – or, with one socially distanced visitor outside, perhaps.

We need to have orders for books by Monday 22nd June at the latest.

ST PETER'S CENTRE

In line with government instructions, our Pre-School, Little Fishes, are now welcoming more children back to the group each week. Whilst this is good news, of course, it does mean that, in accordance with Church of England and Diocesan guidelines, our Centre is out of bounds to everyone else (except for cleaning, necessary maintenance etc). No other events can happen there at present. Please keep our pre-school staff, children and parents in your prayers at this challenging time.

WHEN WILL OUR CHURCH BUILDING RE-OPEN?

New Government guidelines issued on Friday (subject to further guidance from the diocese) means that we are able to open our church building for **INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE PRAYER ONLY** from this week. Social distancing, hygiene and cleaning of the building have to be carefully followed. Those at risk because of underlying health conditions or age are still urged to stay at home. We will be using only the Lady Chapel and limiting entry to no more than 6 people at a time. At first, we plan to open on Saturday mornings from 9 – 30 am to 11 am, starting this Saturday 20th. This will be supervised with two volunteers each time. We are still not permitted to have regular worship services, until further notice.

Morning Prayer to share at 10 am on Sunday

If there is more than one person present, someone may wish to read the parts marked (L), everyone says the rest together. You can say alternate verses in the Psalm and in the Canticle. Please have a Bible to hand. You may wish to light a candle.

(L) O Lord, open our lips

All: and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

All: Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you heavens:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord all people on earth:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
O people of God bless the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you priests of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord you servants of the Lord:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.
Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit:
bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart.
Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit:
sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

This hymn is said or sung:

Morning has broken like the first morning
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird
Praise for the singing
Praise for the morning
Praise for them springing fresh from the world

Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven
Like the first dewfall on the first grass
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden
Sprung in completeness where his feet pass

Mine is the sunlight
Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play
Praise with elation, praise ev'ry morning
God's recreation of the new day

(L) The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind:

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever. Amen.

Pause to call to mind our sins and confess them to God:

(L) Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

All: Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you. We are not worthy to be called your children. We turn to you again. Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.

All say *The Gloria*:

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,

we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

We now say the collect for Trinity 1 (see previous page)

Read Exodus 19 v 2 – 8a followed by Psalm 100 concluding with:

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Read Romans 5 v 1 - 8

All: Alleluia, alleluia. Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening. You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

Now read Matthew 9 v 35 to 10 v 23. Here are some thoughts from Fr Keith on today's readings:

'Paul, writing to the early church in Rome, talks about 'boasting in our sufferings'. What he is referring to at that time, is persecution – submitting to pain and even death for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Fortunately, that is something that we have not had to face (at least, up to now!) So, we might think, that his words are not relevant us. However, what Paul goes on to say about the consequences of suffering, might ring some bells with all of us who are suffering, in a different way, the effects of 'lockdown'. What we are going through cannot compare, in degree, with what our forebears went through, but there are lessons to be learned, particularly that out of suffering there can be positive outcomes. Let's consider what Paul goes on to say: 'suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.'

Each of us will be dealing with what is happening at the moment in our own way. We have all had various freedoms taken away from us and that has led to many different responses – anger, resentment, a sense of unfairness or injustice, frustration, fear, and perhaps a feeling of helplessness. But, by and large, we have accepted the need for the lockdown, and, in a typically British way, moaned a bit and then got on with it! We have, for the past 12 weeks 'endured'. Now we need to reflect on whether that has, as Paul suggests, produced 'character'. Ask yourself, whether your experience has in any way made you a better person – more considerate of others, more prayerful, more determined to make better use of your time, more conscious of how your behaviour impacts others, consider what your priorities should be in future. If any of these apply to you, I would say that endurance has produced character, character building at least!

But has 'character' produced 'hope'? What has this crisis done to your faith? Has your reflection, in this time of crisis, made you realise, even more, your dependence on God? Have you thought more about His love for us, demonstrated in the gift of the Holy Spirit? We are not on our own. We have 'hope' because God has told us that He will never let us down. Moreover, our perspective on life is different to those without faith. We believe that our re-birth in the waters of the font started us on the road of everlasting life, which continues beyond our time here on earth. Our hope is rooted

in the promise of Jesus that He has gone head to prepare a place for us in His Fathers' Kingdom. No matter how bleak the present may be, the bigger picture places us in the hands of God forever. So, ask yourself, has your hope been strengthened?

Because Jesus has experienced human life for Himself, He is well aware of all of our fears and weaknesses. He understands how each and every one of us has been feeling over the past weeks, and He is there to help – if we let Him. But, we must be careful not to just keep looking inside ourselves. Endurance, character and hope shouldn't be merely about us believers. We have a job to do for God in the world outside, and today's Gospel reminds us of that.

In Matthew we read today that 'the crowds were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd', and that Jesus had compassion on them. There are plenty of people in that state today, and, like Jesus we need to have compassion on them and find practical ways to make a difference in their lives – material and spiritual. 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few' said Jesus, and he sent out his disciples to go and give more and more people 'hope'. He warned the apostles that it wouldn't be easy – they would be 'sheep in the midst of wolves', but He said that, if they endured to the end, they would be saved. Thankfully, the Twelve, and those who came after them, took up the challenge, and that is why we are here as Christians today.

The question for us, having endured the Covid crisis, is will we rise to Jesus' challenge to us, to carry on that work today? Will we dare to address the other major crises in our society? Feelings of harassment and helplessness because of poverty, inequality, and racism, a lack of a sense of purpose, and the growing realisation of the inherent emptiness of materialism. There is a thirst for the 'spiritual' in our country, and if we don't move to address it, there are others who will, and they will lead many people astray. Jesus is the hope that they need. Only His love will restore purpose and fulfilment to them in spiritual ways, and, through us, in practical ways too. Jesus gave his disciples the power to bring healing, and that is what he gives to us too – healing for a society still divided and unequal, thirsty for change.

The talk, now, is of 'easing the restrictions' and 'coming out of lockdown'. So, after 12 weeks of having more time to reflect on our faith and our priorities, has our character been strengthened? Are we more ready to help in the Lord's harvest, to proclaim that 'The Kingdom of Heaven has come near'? Has our hope been made more secure? God proves his love for us in the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now is the time for us to reflect on how we are going to prove our love for Him, in this time of reconstruction and 'new normal'. The old problems are still there, now with added problems, for many. Jesus wants to send us out into this 'new normal' with His message of hope, when we are allowed to go. Will we then follow the example of the Twelve and take up His challenge? We shouldn't just go back to how things were. We need to pray, to listen and to act, even though we may face opposition and 'persecution' along the way. Our role will be crucial in the difficult weeks and months ahead, when more restrictions get lifted.'

Pause for your own reflections, and then we say the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

We now say together:

All: You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of your servant David.

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, ♦
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, ♦
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old ♦
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors, ♦
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear, ♦
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the
Most High, ♦
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation ♦
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God ♦
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the
shadow of death, ♦
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

All: You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of your servant David.

Our prayers today are from Sheila Taylor. Let us pray:

We give thanks and praise for Your church here on earth, for our Bishops Andrew and Jo and for our parish priests, Father Keith and Rev Carol who have been guiding us during these difficult times, with prayers, encouragement and the sense of hope that we may soon be able to meet each other, face to face in love and peace.

Lord in your Mercy: Hear our prayer

We give thanks and prayers for the wellbeing and health of our queen, her husband and their family. Creator God, we are part of the tensions and injustices of the world: heal the resentment between people, and intervene in the world's conflicts. Give world leaders guidance and strength of purpose to do only good for all their people.

Lord in your Mercy: Hear our prayer

Father God, help us to be gentle, with others and with ourselves. Give us, we pray, the calm that makes for consideration and the respect for others that makes us courteous. Take from us hard words and the cynical look. Let us be to others as we would wish them to be to us and, when we fail, forgive us.

Lord in your Mercy: Hear our prayer

Caring God, we pray for all those who are afflicted by physical, emotional or mental illness especially the problems caused by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Help them to keep their eyes fixed on you, and give them the courage to face the trials and temptations that may come. Especially we pray for those we know who have suffered from the virus, those in self-isolation, carers, medical and administrative staff in our hospitals, care homes and GP Practices and all Key Workers. We thank you Lord for their steadfast dedication.

Lord in your Mercy: Hear our prayer

Holy God, your love reaches beyond the grave. At the end of our days on earth be with us and with those we love and with those whom we love and have gone before us. We pray now for those who have recently died, for those bereaved and mourning. For those whose anniversary of death falls at this time.

Lord in your Mercy: Hear our prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for hearing our prayers and as we move into the coming week help us to remember our Saviour's words as he sent his disciples out into the world "As you go, proclaim the good news, the Kingdom of Heaven has come near".

Merciful Father: Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

As Jesus taught us, so we pray: Our Father in heaven....

This hymn may be said or sung:

God's Spirit is in my heart
He has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do,
What I have to do

*He sent me to give the Good News to the poor
tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more
tell blind people that they can see
and set the down trodden free
and go tell everyone the news that the
kingdom of God has come
and go tell everyone
the news that God's kingdom has come.*

Just as the Father sent me
so I'm sending you out to be,
my witnesses throughout the world,
the whole of the world.

Chorus

Don't carry a load in your pack,
you don't need two shirts on your back
a workman can earn his own keep,
can earn his own keep.

Chorus

Don't worry what you have to say,
don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart
will speak in your heart.

Chorus

Let us pray:

God of truth, help us to keep your law of love and to walk in ways of wisdom, that we may find true life in Jesus Christ your Son. Amen.

Remember, Lord, what you have wrought in us
and not what we deserve,
and as you have called us to your service
make us worthy of our calling
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit equip us to serve and
worship you: and may the grace of Our Lord Jesus
Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy
Spirit be with us, and remain with us, today and always.
Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, and rise with Christ in glory. Amen.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF THE RECENTLY DEPARTED, ESPECIALLY:

CALEB PERFECT; JOHNNY JONES; AWAIS ALI;
TERRY RIGBY

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK – TRINITY 2

Jeremiah 20 v 7 - 13; Romans 6 v 1b - 11;
Matthew 10 v 24 - 39

HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK TO:

ISAAC CHEUNG (TODAY)

THE HUNDRED CLUB

Thank you to everyone who has continued to support our hundred club during the time of lockdown. We have three months of draws to catch up on! These have been carried out by Fr Keith and witnessed. Cheques, as they say, will be in the post! First prize £79 – 50, second prize £33 – 13, third prize £19 – 98. The winners are:

March: First – Claire Boud; Second – Tony Beckton;
Third – Val & Andrew Crow

April: First – Barbara Rose; Second - Gladys Mitchener; Third – Jessica Povey

May: First – Paulene West; Second – Maria Luff;
Third – Ann Cobb

You can still join the 100 Club even in lockdown – please contact Fr Keith.

Evening Prayer

O Lord open our lips,
and our mouth shall show forth your praise.

O God make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul. ♦
O Lord my God, how excellent is your greatness!
- 2 You are clothed with majesty and honour, ♦
wrapped in light as in a garment.
- 3 The sun knows the time for its setting. ♦
You make darkness that it may be night.
- 4 O Lord, how manifold are your works! ♦
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
- 5 When you send forth your spirit, they are created, ♦
and you renew the face of the earth.
- 6 May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; ♦
may the Lord rejoice in his works;
- 7 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; ♦
I will make music to my God while I have my being.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

This hymn may be said or sung:

O Strength and Stay upholding all creation,
whoever dost thyself unmoved abide;
yet day by day the light in due gradation
from hour to hour through all its changes guide.

Grant to life's day a calm unclouded ending,
An eve untouched by shadows of decay,
the brightness of a holy deathbed blending
With dawning glories of the eternal day.

Hear us, O Father, gracious and forgiving,
through Jesus Christ thy co-eternal Word,
who, with the Holy Ghost, by all things living
Now and to endless ages art adored.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,
we pray with one heart and mind:

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your mercy come down upon us
to cleanse our hearts
and set us free to sing your praise
now and for ever Amen.

*A Psalm is said: Mon 28; Tue 33; Wed 119 v 33 - 56;
Thurs 40; Fri 35; Sat 46, ending with:*

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.

*Two Scripture Readings now follow (see below). Between
the two readings we say:*

- 1 Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ♦
whose judgements are true and just.
- 2 Praise our God, all you his servants, ♦
all who fear him, both small and great.
- 3 The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns: ♦
let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory.
- 4 For the marriage of the Lamb has come ♦
and his bride has made herself ready.
- 5 Blessed are those who are invited ♦
to the wedding banquet of the Lamb.

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb ♦
be blessing and honour and glory and might,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Readings:

Monday: Job 13; Romans 7 v 1 - 6
Tuesday: Job 14; Romans 7 v 7 - end
Wednesday: Job 15; Romans 8 v 1 - 11
Thursday: Job 16 v 1 to 17 v 2; Romans 8 v 12 - 17
Friday: Job 17 v 3 - end; Romans 8 v 18 - 30
Saturday: Job 18; Romans 8 v 31 - end

Gospel Canticle: The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)

My spirit rejoices in you, O God, my soul proclaims your
greatness.

1) My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit
rejoices in God my Saviour; he has looked with favour on
his lowly servant.

2) From this day all generations will call me blessed; the
Almighty has done great things for me and holy is his
name.

3) He has mercy on those who fear him, from generation
to generation.

4) He has shown strength with his arm and has scattered
the proud in their conceit.

5) Casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting
up the lowly.

6) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the
rich away empty.

7) He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, to
remember his promise of mercy.

8) The promise made to our ancestors, to Abraham and
his children for ever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever.
Amen.

My spirit rejoices in you, O God, my soul proclaims your
greatness.

*Prayers of thanksgiving are made for the day that is
ending. Intercessions are offered for the church, the world
and for individuals, the sick and the departed.*

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

The Collect for Trinity 1 (see first page)

Kindle in our hearts, O God,
the flame of love which never ceases,
that it may burn in us, giving light to others.
May we shine for ever in your temple,
set on fire with your eternal light,
even your Son Jesus Christ,
our Saviour and our Redeemer.

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray, and in your great
mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,
for the love of your only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all
evermore. Amen.

**Sermon from Bishop Jo for
Trinity 1 on Matthew 9 v 35 to 10 v 15**

SHAKE, SHAKE, SHAKE

So the door has been closed in your face. Perhaps you were going around the neighbourhood (as one did, pre-pandemic), delivering the church Christmas leaflet. Or you were enquiring about collective worship at your son or daughter's school. Or in your PSHE class at school you tried to defend the traditional Christian notion of marriage. Or you've had stones at your window because the vicar lives there. Or you've been fired from a job because you wore a cross around your neck.

The door has been closed in your face, closed because you're a Christian who's willing to let your faith be known. How do you feel?

Today's gospel encourages us not to feel a failure. Not even to dwell in the rejection. But to shake the dust off our feet and go on our way. Shake shake shake. Not to linger. Not to mope. But to get on our way because the gospel beckons, the kingdom of God draws, the call of God continues, there are many fields that are ripe for harvest.

The door was closed in Jesus' face over and over and over again. It's a good job he wasn't offended too easily or didn't take it too personally.

And let's be honest: this is the reaction God gets from us, all of us, a lot of the time. And if you're going to be a disciple and join in the mission of God, this is the reaction you're going to need to get used to. Jesus spells that out from the very outset, and in particular here in Matt 9-10 where he explains the call and sends out the apostles in mission. He says, "As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town." That's the life of a missionary. Lots of shaking dust.

Now that's easier said than done. For myself I recall a door closing where my reaction involved anything but shaking the dust.

Back when I was at uni I put myself forward to volunteer on a helpline, a sort of student-run version of the Samaritans. At interview I remember being asked about my approach in varying situations and whether I was really willing to stay awake all night. Then on the way out I was 'casually' asked if I had any faith commitment and explained I was a Christian. I predicted there and then what surely followed: a note declaring that my listening could not be objective because I would be too judgemental. It still rankles: and whose listening had been judgemental, I still wonder?!

As I recall that incident, almost 40 years ago, I still feel hard done-by.

I wonder if you can relate to a time you've felt hard done-by for your faith, and tried to disentangle the strands of disappointment and humiliation. On the one hand there's the personal sense of failure—that if

I'd been more charismatic or more skilled or more prayerful, things would have turned out fine and dandy. The reassuring thing about failure is that it allows you to preserve your narcissism, your deep-seated pride that says this is really all fundamentally about me. If it went wrong it was because I got it wrong, all of which preserves the underlying conviction that if I can get it right then it'll be because of my brilliance.

But failure is only half of it. The other feeling is rejection. It might be the hostility that comes from someone who doesn't like the God they don't believe in and slams the door. Or it might be another kind of rejection, the indifference that finds your friend checking their phone as soon as the conversation touches on something spiritually significant, dismissing you with a 'whatever'. Which is a polite version of "Please just leave me alone." Or perhaps you know the passive-aggressive response, which prevaricates to avoid confrontation.

Indifference can present as care-less or care-free. But scratch the surface, and you find it's either a mask that hides profound feelings of exhaustion, fear, or bitterness—a way of protecting oneself from being hurt or overwhelmed or terrified. Or else it's a carefully-orchestrated attempt to avoid taking anything in life too seriously, to take refuge in one distraction after another, a way of escaping direct attention to death, regret, fragility, even love – in other words, an elaborately massaged form of despair.

And what does Jesus tell us to do? "Shake the dust off your feet." The sands of time are heavy. Shake the dust off your feet. You don't know why it is that your efforts are met with indifference. Shake the dust off your feet. Don't assume this is all about you. Shake the dust off your feet. This isn't failure, it's rejection, and they're not the same thing. Shake the dust off your feet. Don't carry that dust everywhere you go, souring friendships, sapping energy, leaking hope. Shake the dust off your feet. Don't take out your anger on people when you have no idea what's making them be so bafflingly indifferent. Shake the dust off your feet. Don't judge them – that's God's job, not yours, and only God knows why they're so distracted or passive or resistant or silent. Shake the dust off your feet. Don't go on a self-righteous rant that assumes you're a perfect embodiment of the gospel and anyone who doesn't repent and be baptized this instant must be stupid. Shake the dust off your feet. Shake, shake, shake. To use a sporting metaphor, "Leave it on the field." Don't carry it round with you. Jesus faced indifference. He said we would face indifference. Don't be surprised; don't be devastated; don't be bitter. Shake the dust off your feet.

Isn't this why Christians burn out? Because we offer wave upon wave of effort and hope and energy, and find ourselves met with indifference and passive-aggression and a shrug of the shoulders that says, "Whatever." Because we can't get over the indifference. We can't believe a bit more effort won't break it down. So we don't shake the dust. We go on trying, way too long. We lose all perspective. We take it to heart. We lose the joy. We start to go through the

motions. Before we know it we're inhaling dust and we can't breathe and we're drowning. If that is where you are right now, listen to these words of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Shake the dust. Shake it. Shake, shake, shake. Leave this one to me."

Think about dust for a moment. What did God say to Adam in Genesis Ch 3? 'Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return'. It's what we say to each other on Ash Wednesday. Dust and ashes: dust is death. And yet in Genesis 2 we learned that God formed Adam from the dust of the earth and breathed life into his nostrils.

So when you shake dust don't lament your failure, but praise the God who made all things out of the dust of the earth, and in Christ made all things new, and still does. By shaking the dust you're letting God do what only God can do. Shaking dust isn't sadly washing your hands of failure or angrily tossing aside a broken project. Shaking dust is a prayer that God will do a miracle by making beauty arise from ashes and making life from the dust of the earth. You have prepared the way of the Lord; that's all you can do: so let go, and pray: that all may see the salvation of our God.

Meanwhile let's make sure God doesn't find hostility or indifference when visiting our house. That when we're invited to join the harvest we don't just sigh, 'whatever!'. When the moment for hospitality arises, we're not too busy, or distracted, or fearful. Or when God's peace is offered, we don't prevaricate.

When we reject God, by hostility or indifference, we *make dust*, we make death, we become the dust of the earth, to dust we return. And what does God do? *God makes us anew from the dust of the earth*. God makes something beautiful out of our dust and ashes. When we shake the dust off our feet we're saying, "Thank you, Lord God for the privilege of being part of the way you redeem the world. I've tried with this your precious child, and I've been rejected. You're going to have to re-create this one on your own." You made anything out of dust and ashes lately? 'Course not. Can't be done. God made anything out of dust and ashes lately? 'Course God has. All the time.

(Also available to watch online)