

Wednesday 1st September 2020

Matthew 11.16-19, 25-30

The rhythms of our lives have been dramatically changed. Many people suffer from anxiety when their patterns are altered and events become difficult to predict. Yet, here, Jesus also offers hope in times of uncertainty. Jesus says: 'Come to me.' If we respond, we will learn from him, finding new ways of being, and we will be able to rest, because he eases the anxiety that comes from change. New ways of living have been revealed to infants, he says, which could mean for us that children and young people will assume leadership roles as the Church moves forward after periods of change and confusion.

Matthew 14.13-21. Hope for young people by inspiring a young boy to share his food, through Jesus a large crowd was fed. Being together is important, which is why Jesus wanted the people to stay. The way in which he achieved this offers hope to the Church that, despite the separation during this year, we can stay together spiritually, even when physical meetings are impossible. What keeps the crowd together is an act of generosity, significantly the response to Jesus of a young person. Our enforced separation has taught us the value of staying together; this passage shows us how we might do this in the times ahead, following the lead of the young, sharing our time and resources with one another. Recent weeks and months have been unprecedented for our own lives, the life of the nation, the world and the Church. It is into these new and extraordinary times as ever, when we turn to the Bible, we can find fresh truths in familiar passages. Matthew's messages of hope, reflections and activities We have learned to be very resourceful throughout the pandemic and this will help to inspire us to put our trust anew in Jesus, rather than in physical buildings or earthly expressions of faith?

Matthew 14.22-33 Jesus invites Peter to make himself vulnerable as a demonstration of faith. The life of the Church has changed dramatically this year with rules around social distancing and public gatherings. Change may be necessary sometimes, but it is also frightening, because it can make us vulnerable. None of us wants to perform an action that ends with a cry of 'Lord, save me' issuing from our lips. However, this Bible passage shows us that when Jesus invites us to 'come', this is often an invitation to vulnerability. Peter demonstrates this when he begins to sink, but he also demonstrates that our hope in these situations lies in keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. We may be called to risky or scary actions, so we must keep looking to Christ so that our faith in him may conquer doubts about our own capabilities. Has this left you feeling vulnerable, more susceptible to the risk of sinking as Peter did? What are the practical ways in which you keep your focus on Jesus? Over the past few months in cyberspaces rather than physical spaces, expressing togetherness in new and sometimes alien ways. This has led to us asking questions about what it means to be Church. This Bible passage finds Jesus investing his hope in Peter as

the rock on which the Church will be built. It's interesting that Jesus' rock was not a rock at all, but a person. Our church buildings, impressive as many may be, are, by way of contrast, not people but merely rocks. Simon Peter was a person, but he was a person who recognised Jesus' true nature; this is what made him a suitable foundation stone for the future Church. Keep a rock somewhere and you will see it often as a reminder of the firm foundation you are building your life upon. All that I am, all that I do, all who I shall meet this day I offer to you now, Lord God