

Charity number 1180853

7th March 2021

Dear brothers and sisters,

The past year has been upsetting in so many ways – the upset and the pain of not being able to be with people we love and enjoy, at times we would have wanted to be. The disruption of shops, businesses, sports clubs, being forced to close. The disappointment of holidays cancelled. The unsettling thought of not knowing when we can put firm plans in the diary again. Such an upsetting year, our daily lives rocked to the core.

Jesus brings great upset in the Gospel reading set for this Sunday. Wielding a whip and sending tables, goats, sheep, doves, coins flying in all directions. It must have been mayhem. He was so angry to turn everything upside-down in the Temple courts like that. That in itself overturns idea we have of gentle Jesus, meek and mild, the Prince of Peace. This is God who is slow to anger, but he does reach a point here where his righteous anger overturns the tables. 'Stop making my Father's house into a marketplace', he could be saying, 'My Father's house is for prayer and worship, and you clutter the place up, disrupting prayer and worship with your noisy trading and marketplace activities.' It's a misunderstanding to assume Jesus overturned the tables because of money – it's not about that. It's all about prayer and worship. It's about giving God all the honour and glory.

In this time when the pandemic has overturned many aspects of our daily lives, perhaps now is a really good time to consider whether there's things we usually do in our day which gets in the way of prayer and worship. Maybe not

trading in animals like would have happened in Jesus' day, but perhaps nonetheless we do things which make it hard for us to draw close to God across all the clutter?

It's how we treat God that's at stake here. We need to ask ourselves, do what we do in our worship, in our prayers, in our daily lives, bring honour to God, does it give him all the glory....or do we fill our days up with so much clutter that gets in the way? Do we spend more time in our day bringing glory to ourselves than to God? I believe that now – before things return to 'normal' – is the time to re-evaluate our lives, to look carefully at everything we do. And to look not only at what we do, but the way we do it.

The reason this is important, is because Jesus died on a cross – and rose again – so we might be forgiven our wrongdoings, which is fundamental to being able to draw close to God, to being able to pray and to worship. That's the cross which is foolishness to those who are perishing, it's completely misunderstood by those without faith. Having Christ-like approach to life overturns the values of most of the world, but orients us to God's values, to His way of viewing this world. If we are to draw close to Him, and Him to us, then we need to adopt his approach to life also.

This Lent, let us ensure that in all we do, all we say, all we think, wherever we find ourselves, however we are feeling – let us ensure we draw close to God, we love Him with our whole heart and mind and soul and strength, so that all the praise and glory will go to Him.

With love in Christ, Tina

NOTICES

Holy Trinity Blacon are the living church of our living God, and we continue to be at work here! If you are able, do check the parish website www.holytrinityblacon.org or our Facebook page (holytrinityblacon) for updates.

LOCKDOWN affects the whole country now, but fortunately we can still continue to meet (socially distanced) in church to worship together, and we will continue meeting at 9.30am each Sunday. The minibus is also running, so do let us know if you would like a lift.

PRAYING FOR BLACON This week, Louise and Tina are joined by Jo Pemberton who is on placement with us, and we are prayerfully putting out chocolates, as we take our exercise. Do join us in praying for the residents of the following roads: *Blacon Point Road, Fowler Road, Clifton Drive and Dalton Close.*

EVENING PRAYER We meet each Wednesday 5pm for Evening Prayer on Zoom. Do let us know if you would like the link – everyone is welcome to join us.

LENT Each Sunday in Lent, after the 9.30am service, there is a time of silent contemplative prayer in church from 11am. There is also a Lent Course run online on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm 'Transformed by the presence of Jesus' – do let us know if you want the Zoom link.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS – The video is now on our website, do go to <https://holytrinityblacon.org/whats-on/events/stations-of-the-cross.php> If you do not have access to the internet, and would instead like a DVD of our stations video, please let Tina or Louise know.

SING FOR FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – Starting Monday March 1st at 6.30pm is a series of sessions to sing together and learn together about fruits of the Spirit. For a Zoom link and further information, please contact Tricia H

ELECTORAL ROLL – In preparation for our Annual Meeting on 11th April, we need to update our electoral roll. If you want to check your entry, please contact Sue K or Linda in the Parish Office. They will also be able to get a form to you if you need to add or amend an entry (forms are also available in church). Alterations to be completed by 1st April.

CONTACTS:

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