

5 July 2020, Fourteenth Sunday of the Year

'Rejoice, daughter of Sion' began our First Reading. Did we experience yesterday as a 'day of great joy'? Perhaps you were able to meet with family members and friends you had not seen for a long time. Perhaps you found great pleasure in a haircut or a visit to the pub, simple pleasures we would have taken for granted a couple of months ago.

Or perhaps we continue to find the situation around us difficult and burdensome? Perhaps the sight of others enjoying family reunions brings to mind those we have lost over the past few months. Perhaps we long for a 'peace and rest' more profound than that which a visit to the barbers or the pub can provide?

In the Second Reading St Paul reminds us that our interests 'are not in the unspiritual but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you'. We cannot ignore that which we have experienced over the past few months, it is certainly real, and we know that the danger of the virus has not gone away, and perhaps at this time as society slowly reopens we need to be more careful than ever.

In the Gospel Reading Jesus invites us, 'come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest'. As we look back on our experiences of the past few months then we will notice the absence of being able to gather for Mass and the opportunity to receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, but can we recognise the presence of Jesus in our lives in other ways? Has it been a time of encounter with the Lord, whether through renewed prayer at home or in renewed service of the needy and vulnerable? As Jesus mentions in the Gospel sometimes it is children who understand these things better than adults. When we return to church in a couple of weeks' time we will be welcomed by artwork produced by our primary school children including the message 'helping hands, happy hearts'. Perhaps in their wisdom is the path to an encounter with the Lord and that peace, rest, and true joy for which we long.

I have also been asked to mention something about our parish 'live simply challenge' which we are doing as part of the CAFOD live simply award scheme. Before the lockdown parishioners were given a list of simple tasks or challenges and asked to keep a record of how many they were able to do in a week. These included things like: 'say the live simply prayer each day', 'walk, cycle, or bus instead of using the car', 'buy locally produced vegetables' etc. At the end of each month points are totalled up and are then displayed on the banner which for this week has been placed within the range of the camera so that it can be seen by all. My message is two-fold, to our own parishioners please keep going and send in your monthly points to Tony Rowlett, and to those who have recently joined us through livestreaming then if you want to learn more then visit our parish website and look for 'live simply challenge' there.

Finally I know that many people are looking forward to going back to church soon but just to reassure those who won't be able to return for sometime that we will continue to livestream Sunday Mass at 9.00am on a Sunday morning so we hope that you will still be able to keep joining us.