



First Sunday After Trinity, 14th June 2020

Dear Friends,

Today the lectionary invites us to think about vocations. Our readings explore the calling of the first disciples, and we are each encouraged in the light of Pentecost, and our relationship with the Trinity, to consider our gifts and how we may be called to offer them back to God's service. One such gift is music. We've been greatly blessed in recent weeks to have music, recorded remotely by members of the choir at St Mary's, and expertly edited together to enhance our online worship. This Sunday has been designated 'Music Sunday'. Tim Pratt, our Director of Music at St Mary's writes:

"This Sunday, 14th June has been designated by the Royal School of Church Music as "Music Sunday", an annual event to celebrate the powerful role of music in Christian worship. Churches up and down the land have been encouraged to take part in this international celebration. Hugh Morris, Director of the RSCM, explains the thinking behind RSCM Music Sunday 2020: 'Music Sunday is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the way music is used in worship, and to celebrate the contribution of the many who lead and perform it'.

In Abergavenny we have a strong heritage of music within the liturgy that dates back to the original monastic foundation at St Mary's and has continued in one form or another ever since. Over the last few years, we have even been able to experience the timeless sound of medieval plainsong at some of the monastic offices.

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There are references to music and singing throughout the Bible, from the book of Genesis right the way through to Revelation. Indeed, the Song of Solomon, and the Psalms (The Songs of David) place music right at the forefront of our religious activities. It may be difficult at the moment, but I am absolutely certain that before too long we will find a way to reinstate that most communal of Christian activities. We may currently have to sing in private, but things will improve and then in the words of Psalm 96 we will once more join as one as we “sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth”.

Of course, vocations don't stop being offered or celebrated after they are given. Each new day is an opportunity to dedicate ourselves and our gifts once again to God's service. There are few greater celebrations than when we can come together to acknowledge years of a vocation lived well and bearing fruit. This week Fr Jeff has announced that he will retire from his role in the parish from the end of September. Fr Jeff has been a tremendously faithful servant of the Church here in this place, first as a Lay Reader, Deacon, and Priest. He has been a great support and inspiration to me in my time here and as he prepares to retire I know that we have lots to give thanks for in a vocation lived out with great faith and humility.

We continue to pray that God will raise up a faithful pastor to care for this parish. Jesus says: 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.' What could God be calling you to, I wonder?

With Every blessing,

Fr Tom

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