

TRINITY 6: 2026

The Parable of the Sower is perhaps one of the best known. And how fitting to mention the scorching and withering and indeed wild fires of today, which must make any farmer weep. We should pray more for them and regularly, publicly. We must engage with them too, something I believe, Bishop Martin championed.

Many you will have seen on that lovely short drive to Great Bealings, the harvest is already gathered in; we know that our seasons are changing rapidly and that climate change is not something for future generations to worry about but our own, present generation. The film mentioned in this week's E-News will literally be the talk of the town, when it is shown here in Woodbridge this Thursday at 7pm in St John's Church hall. This **"People's Emergency Briefing"** as it is called, is indeed an emergency, in every corner of the world, affecting every nationality and livelihood. The variety of Professors, scientists and politicians contributing to the script and the pressing narrative, really need to be respected, and listened to. If we don't, the present children in our schools and colleges will rise up and, rightly, revolt!

I am guessing today's Gospel parable was also shocking and hard to hear. The good seed needs rich and fertile soil; the watering and nurture and care is how the Gospel, how the seeds of the Church will flourish and grow. Its sacramental life is at the heart of what sometimes, words cannot unravel or explain. It is the 'mysterium tremendum' which we cannot ignore and should not dismiss. Christ's broken body really does shout out for water and wine to drink. Christ's thirst is surely a cry for forgiveness for all the times we have abused God's beautiful creation.

'The real presence' of God-with-us, and His incarnational love, is why today's parable is as alive, as pregnant, and as life-changing as it ever was. This is no party political broadcast. It is the Gospel of good news, and our redemption: to be faithful to God's word, steadfast in

faith, confident of signs of hopefulness in being good stewards of His Creation. And like charity, it begins at home, often in small ways...

When I walk Peggy around the churchyard the bird food is often empty and the water all gone; when I walk down Turn Lane, I see bags of waste outside people's doors that for some reason have not been collected. Think of the litter strewn in the hedges alongside our motorways or our polluted rivers! There are so many everyday examples where our lack of care is evident, but there are also shining examples of the opposite. Again, around this church recently, I have seen an active member of 'Transition Woodbridge' recording overhead bat movements; I have seen the creation of 'bug hotels', wildlife enhancement and biodiversity. In nearby Kingston fields or Court Meadow, the planting of new tree saplings. They are the real parable, if you like, of what is possible and practical to do to turn the tide of ignorance, selfishness, or greed which we are also, only too familiar with. I am reminded of Pope John XXIII:

"See everything, overlook a great deal, correct a little." That is pastoral wisdom, along with a realistic take on the sin that clings so closely, despite our best efforts.

The parable of the Sower is a renewing call then: about the energy of God, as it is also about the environment God has freely given us to share, enjoy, and protect. On this 'Sea Sunday' we think particularly about its riches and hidden depths, as well as its dangers, over-fishing, you name it. But most of all, this familiar parable is reaching out to us to trust in this same God who cares for every inch of **us**, even the number of our hairs are counted – which is why I went to the barbers on Friday! Liz says that I look like 'Tin, Tin' not to be confused, of course, with 'Bin Face', the next MP for Clacton!

More seriously, sowing and reaping go together. They are part of a single purpose of generating what is wholesome, while keeping at bay everything that is not. Where there is sowing, there must be

reaping. And what we yield needs to be more than ourselves as still ungerminated seed.

Those of you who have heard umpteen 'initiatives' about church growth with accompanying 'straplines' and publicity, feel understandably, tired of all the 'talking the talk' (the General Synod meets again now in York)...when so many churches are struggling to survive at all, struggling to pay their bills let alone their Parish share.

You are only too familiar with this depressing talk of continuing decline. But I guess our Lord's plea to keep on planting and sowing is actually at the heart of what it means to be the body of Christ. Keep on encouraging our young, visiting the sick. Keep on studying and sharing in Word and Sacrament, keep on being places of welcome & song, inviting everyone in to share sacred space. Keep on praying for the needs of the world that we may be instruments of God's grace and peace. Keep on living sacrificially so that others may live freely, joyfully, abundantly.

I leave with you 'The River-God's Song' by John Fletcher (1579-1625):

"Do not fear to put thy feet
Naked in the river sweet;
Think not leech or newt or toad
Will bite thy foot when thou hast trod;
Nor let the water rising high
As thou wad'st in make thee cry
And sob, but ever live with me,
And not a wave shall trouble thee."

AMEN.