

### TRINITY 3

There are so many lovely distractions at this time of year. Shall I go and see Oasis kiss and make up in Cardiff or shall I go and see Ed Sheeran instead? Linda (in the Parish Office) is going to hear Ed, next week, I think. I guess she has a very lovely employer! There's Wimbledon of course, the remains of the Aldeburgh festival, the rumour of holidays to come and a time to chill. For the swifts in town this is their last month with us before they fly back home. Is it no wonder that they need food and strength for the journey, and such a long journey?

Today's famous Gospel reading and the sending out of the 70 new disciples ahead of Jesus is all about having faith and confidence in the one doing the sending. The colourful biblical language of devils to be conquered at every possible turn in the road was keenly felt; no wonder CS Lewis enjoyed writing his own 'Screwtape Letters' to examine the whole subject of temptation, distraction, and making the wrong choices...

But the good news of the Gospel is irreversible and here is Dr Luke with his inscription and stamp on the Christian mission for all God's pilgrim people:

"See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the powers of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

This great Commission as it is called, is our commission too – to rejoice in our calling and to trust in the One who is sending us out: to make new disciples, to grow the church, even if sometimes, it takes some grit and determination especially when our wings of faith feel tired. The accompanying psalm for today's readings is Psalm 30 and I recommend it to you to be said every day of this week when you have a quiet moment. It is a wonderful prayer, really, about all the ups and downs of every faith journey but we are never left in doubt that the God of all creation will be our constant strength and stay. It would be difficult to choose my favourite verse, but I think verse two is wonderfully honest and direct:

“O Lord my God, I cried out to you,  
And you restored me to health.”

St Luke would have loved this image of the medicine of the Gospel, as I hope our own General Synod meeting in York will also. If I may steal our local hospice's current theme and logo for our everyday Christian mission, 'HOP TO IT' would be very apt! Rejoice in your calling to be a partner in the good news of the Gospel, and to listen to its hidden treasures and depth - to teach us and guide us on all our journeying – that we may travel more hopefully and confidently together.

When people pass the Rectory now, they all stop to look heavenwards. They can hear the swifts call, but like me, they are not sure if they are real swifts above them. Unfortunately, so far, our transmitted recording of the

swifts' call has not revealed any visitors yet to our swift boxes (the same is true in the eaves of St Mary's House). But the moral of the story is, not to give up – to be patient, expectant – because they will arrive and nest at the Rectory and Market Hill and probably, when no-one is looking!

When the kingdom of God comes close to us, we need to be open to God's surprises of wonder, trust, and joyfulness. You will know WH Davies' words on leisure which I would prefer to call 'encouraging a contemplative life':

“What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare. No time to stand beneath the boughs and stare as long as sheep or cows. No time to see, when woods we pass, where squirrels hide their nuts in grass. No time to see, in broad daylight, streams full of stars, like skies at night. No time to turn at Beauty's glance, and watch her feet, how they can dance. No time to wait till her mouth can enrich that smile her eyes began. A poor life this is if, full of care, we have no time to stand and stare.”

AMEN.