



EASTER 2018



How do we tell the good news, the gospel, of Jesus Christ? It has been a theme this Lent when the diocese has been Praying Together using short passages each day of Mark's Gospel which begins, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God". Mark tells stories of Jesus healing people and teaching how to live in the love of God. There is pace and energy with the repeated use of, "and immediately..."; and there is conflict as it becomes clear that following him requires us making choices as we turn our lives around to God.

I have enjoyed our Praying Together. This year a different person has written each day - a reflection, prayer and suggested act. Some have made me really think about what it is to be a disciple, to follow Christ.

So often we find fresh insights in well-known passages of scripture. There has been a very satisfying mix of insights, some of which have spoken to me deeply.

One of the most disturbing things in Mark is the failures of the disciples. They don't always 'get it', Judas betrayed Jesus, Peter denied he knew him, they ran away at the crucial moment and only the women stayed but even they were, "looking from a distance". It was the centurion who declared, "Truly this man was God's Son!". At the end of the Gospel, which is really the beginning, when the women came to the tomb and found it empty they fled and said nothing to anyone for they were afraid. We have a gospel to proclaim but that gospel does raise questions for us who want so much for church to be successful.

The way Mark and each of the evangelists in the New Testament tell the gospel has great significance for us and raises questions for a cathedral that is well known for its beauty, reverence and good order. Lent gets us to think again about what this Christian life is all about. Prayer, fasting and charity help us savour what is good, true and

beautiful. We appreciate life more because of a holy Lent but it is not what makes us perfect. Perhaps what Lent does is make us realistic about ourselves and others, to accept our failings and know our need of God and one another.

A joyful Easter is also the moment when we can reimagine what God wants for us. At the empty tomb we

begin to sense that death is not the last word. Some things are for ever - goodness, life and love. Start to live by that sort of truth and it changes the world.

I wish the Friends what remains of a holy Lent and a joyful life-giving Easter. There is good news to live by and tell.

+Nicholas Sarum