

Ascension 2020

Dear Everyone at St Peter's

I do hope that everyone is still managing to keep well and not become too burdened in these difficult times. Although we are dispersed we do belong together and I hope our prayers for each other and for the world God loves so much, are helping. It is sad that Bob Hookham has died. His funeral will be at Barham on Friday 15th May taken by Fr Simon. We will be thinking of Esther and their family and friends especially on that day. It is hoped that later there may be a memorial service in St Peter's.

The Bishop of Dover has said that one of the good things to come out of these present times is that we are worshipping more at home. I hope that we are finding it possible to do this.

We are at that time of year when we are approaching Ascension Day, 21st May. Readings for the next few weeks:

Sunday 10th May Easter 5 Acts 7. 55 – end & John 14. 1 – 14

Sunday 17th May Easter 6 Acts 17. 22 – 31 & John 14. 15 – 21

Thursday 21st May Ascension Day Acts 1. 1 – 11 & Luke 24. 44 - end

These Sunday gospels come from Jesus farewell teaching to his disciples after they had kept the Last Supper and before going out to the garden of Gethsemane. Here Jesus speaks of leaving his disciples for their own good but he will not leave them bereft, for he is sending the Holy Spirit to be with them, to comfort them and to guide them. And then on Ascension Day we read of Jesus leaving from their sight. These readings remind us that even though God may from time to time feel absent from his, God will come to us again often in a new way. We read that the disciples are to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit comes to them. And so, in the 10 days between Ascension Day and Pentecost we are to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit to the whole Church and to the whole world.

In these times there is much for us to pray about. Here are some suggestions – many more can be added:

- everyone suffering from coronavirus
- their families and friends especially those unable to be with those severely ill and at the end of their lives
- the NHS staff, Care Home staff and those who care for persons at home as they seek to help everyone who is ill often in such difficult conditions
- everyone who is bereaved; those for whom the funeral is not quite what they wished for; those unable to attend a funeral
- all government ministers and officials, all health service administrators as they face challenging situations both immediately and in the immediate and longer term future
- everyone who is staying at home, those living on their own, particularly those finding it difficult and those persons caring for children and for other persons without help
- everyone keeping essential services going
- for Archbishop Justin and Bishop Rose that they may lead the church well.

I do miss our gatherings at St Peter's on Sundays and Tuesdays very much. I am very fortunate that Kitty and I can celebrate the Eucharist at home and we do this at 10.45 am on Sundays and 10 am on Wednesdays. As we do this we pray especially for everyone at St Peter's as well as everyone through the world whose lives have been so cruelly disrupted by this virus. I do hope soon we may gather in church again.

We send everyone our best wishes and continue to pray for God's blessing and guidance on us all.

Fr Chris

7th May 2020