

This Week at St Mary's

3 MAY 2020

WHEN ST MARY'S CAN RE-OPEN

I cannot pretend that I am other than impatient for us to be allowed to re-open the church. In the immediate, this would give people something I am sure is desperately needed, a sacred space to spend a little or not so little time before God, with our emotions swirling not far below the surface.

Although there may not be many people currently around in the city, there is the resident population and there are some who come in for work. The hour's exercise we can take means that within at least a mile's radius, more *could* come into the Lace Market, spend some time in the churchyard and/or come into the church.

We know we can pray anywhere, anytime - the great gift of all that Christ has made possible for us. However, the focus, associations, and symbolism of this space set apart for worship and prayer cannot and should not be too quickly brushed aside. These are extreme times. The testimony of some is that it was in a sacred space that they first encountered God.

I have raised this with our Archdeacon, but he said the Diocesan view remains that the current closure will continue. I felt there might be a glimmer of light in a recent email from the Director of Churches and Cathedrals in Church House, London. It's clear from the press that there are many who hope the Archbishops will allow the buildings to re-open for private prayer, subject of course to distancing etc (not hard to achieve at St Mary's!)

We should be thinking about what, over and beyond just being in the space, we will offer when we can again come in. Do let me have suggestions - things you think could help people find themselves drawn closer to the grace of God.

Tom Gillman

GIVING MONEY

Best done **online** but **cheque** also welcome. Preferable from the church's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest 560061 00834602) For **One-off donations**, use either the **QR code** or **Donate button** on the website. *Having to close the church has affected our rental income as well as donations: so now the need is for you, if you can, please to increase your financial commitment to St Mary's.*

LOVE BADE ME WELCOME - Mary Kennett

I was part of Canon Jack Higham's church history group. It was an important part of my life and I learnt a lot. One of the trips we made was to Little Gidding - memorable to many of us as 'I have never been so cold'! It had been Nicholas Ferrar who in the 17th Century set up a lay community there. He had been a friend of the poet George Herbert and after his death, Nicholas had his poems published.

Jack introduced me that day to Herbert, and in particular to his poem Love. It so appealed to me that I wrote it out in calligraphy, set out as a 'scrap book' which I then gave to Jack. He was kind to say how much he appreciated it.

'So I did sit and eat' are the words I would single out. It's as though God is saying to me, 'you don't understand, but Christ is always with you, accepting you. Even though I know I don't think deserve a thing, his invitation to me remains.'

LOVE bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack

 From my first entrance in,

Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning

 If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here:'

 Love said, 'You shall be he.'

'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,

 I cannot look on Thee.'

Love took my hand and smiling did reply,

 'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord; but I have marr'd them: let my shame

 Go where it doth deserve.'

'And know you not,' says Love, 'Who bore the blame?'

 'My dear, then I will serve.'

'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'

 So I did sit and eat.

TWICE THE DEMAND FOR OUR FOODBANKS

Nigel Adams, director of Hope Nottingham which co-ordinates many of the food banks confirms that the best estimate is that there has been a doubling of those needing help from a food bank at this time. All of Nottingham's foodbanks together are giving out food parcels to approx. 1,100 people a week across the city - each person receives enough food for 3 days, 10 meals.

Referrals come through various agencies, but the process has been simplified so that direct email contact can be made too. Filtering requests is not always easy, the need of some is for help in shopping, for others it is broader advice which the CAB can give.

Getting to know people at this time is inevitably more difficult. A 'Wall of Love' has been put up where people can pin their notes. One woman has written: *"I never thought I would need a food bank as I have always worked and had a good job. The present circumstances got me to a point waiting for benefits and so no money for food. Thank you for your help at such difficult times. When things get back to normal, I will certainly not forget you and will send a donation for your wonderful work."*

THE MEADOWS FOOD BANK THIS WEEK NEEDS -

TINNED POTATOES - MASHED POTATOES - JAM/MARMALADE -
TINNED CARROTS - RICE PUDDING - TINNED FRUIT - BISCUITS -
CLOTHES - WASHING TABLETS - WASHING UP LIQUID - BODY WASH
FOR MEN - DEODORANT FOR MEN.

Thanks so much to those who have already responded to help. Contact Beth Mitchell 07775 707 855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com to take further.

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

We regret that in the current public health context, St Mary's has to remain closed.

11.00am SUNDAY SERVICE - livestreamed
(See our website and follow the link, including for Order of Service)

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Please continue to pray for

Estelle Barks
John Bowers
John Conway
Harry Palmer
Mike Ridley

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