

This Week at St Mary's

14th JUNE 2020

OUR STORY OF THE SLAVE TRADE

Following George Floyd's death, there has been lots of reflection on racial tensions throughout our world, with the root cause in the Atlantic slave trade. England's historic complicity is way beyond argument, with new wealth flowing into cities like Nottingham.

The 1998 film made by Julius Ayodeji about the four silver candlesticks in the Castle, each depicting an African slave, locate slave auctions in the Broadmarsh and Goosegate areas of the city.

Asked what kind of people in Nottinghamshire profited from slavery, Mr Ayodeji replied, *"This is almost an unanswerable question. The wealth of England, Britain, the Empire and the Commonwealth were enhanced by the slave trade. Beyond the obvious landed gentry and emerging middle classes - who directly financed and profited from the slave trade - there is an argument that all of the region benefited from the income indirectly."*

My videos for 31st May and 7th June show different sides of the story for which Nottingham should be glad. In the 1760s, 3 year George Africanus (as re-named) was removed from Sierra Leone and ended up as a slave in the Molyneux household in Wolverhampton. As a young man, he moved to our city where he married Esther. They set up a successful employment agency and he became a property owner and had voting rights, extremely unusual and a real success story. His and Esther's memorials are in our church garden.

While George was still alive, young James Still left Nottingham to serve with the navy off the coast of Sierra Leone, enforcing the abolition of the slave trade, the 'trade in human blood'. There he died of yellow fever, aged just 21 and a memorial to him is inside St Mary's. The sadness of his death is writ large, but so too is the pride that a son of Nottingham so gave his life.

Tom Gillman

GOD'S GRANDEUR by Gerard Manley Hopkins - Grant Walton

The beauty of the English countryside on a bright spring day is hard to beat - the season when the oppression of a long winter dissipates as the warm sunshine and new blossoms seem to lift the spirits of the earth itself. This is the atmosphere Hopkin's sonnet describes - the suffusing and animation of creation with "the grandeur of God", shimmering through the world with every ray of reflected sunlight, or the oozing richness of freshly-pressed oil. It's an irrepressible "greatness", apparent to all with eyes to see!

This grandeur not only animates; it also "charges" us with responsibility to care deeply about God's world. The many examples of nature reclaiming human spaces during the lockdown have highlighted our unthinking tendency to sear, blear and smear - to insulate ourselves from feeling the life of God, to wearily trudge through life ignoring His claim on our lives and world. But the end of the story is not the barren soil, the unfeeling feet, the meaningless toil. For God is at work: the "dearest freshness deep down things" is infused by the Holy Ghost Himself, brooding over the chaos to bring forth life and hope; to remind us that as surely as the new day dawns, we are on the brink of a new creation!

*The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.*

*And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

THE MEADOWS FOODBANK - Thanks again for all donated. Buy each week an extra (non perishable) item as an act of self giving love, for someone you don't know. Let Beth Mitchell 07775707855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com know when you've got a few to collect. Particularly needed now: **BISCUITS, TINNED MEAT, TINNED FISH, TINNED KIDNEY BEANS, SHAMPOO (WOMEN'S)**

RE-OPENING ST MARY'S ON MONDAY

We are finalising details for re-opening St Mary's on Monday. The government announced that individuals can enter for solace and prayer, very welcome after this long time of closure. A full risk assessment means there will be all necessary measures to meet requirements for social distancing and hygiene.

You will find on the website the poster which will be at the church door to welcome all (which we hope includes many St Mary's members) arriving. Here is part of what it says:

Being in St Mary's today will give you space to see things on a big canvas. Throughout the centuries that St Mary's has been here, Nottingham has had its share of lows - economic, medical, social, those who never returned from war, etc. There have been many highs too, none more so than our amazing spirit which brings us together in times of hardship.

You may find that just being here seems to bring hope. That's often what can happen. There is so much here which speaks (or more likely sings) out that there is a bigger picture which has God right at the centre. It's as though the voices from the walls and the windows are all saying together - there is a bigger story, which has a good ending. Even executing Jesus Christ, sent by God as our Saviour, did not result in God giving up on us - the opposite, it turns out it was God's way of defeating death.

We will resume worship in the church as soon as permitted.

PRAYING TOGETHER 6.00pm every Thursday join via skype for Evening Prayer. Contact Tom to be included on group list (it's fine to join in when you can.)

LECTIO 365 PRAYER APP daily devotional resource that helps deeper engagement with scripture and inspires prayer put together by Pete Greig founder of 24-7 international, interdenominational movement of prayer. It's free. Several of us are finding it inspirational..

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. *Please continue (better still, increase) your financial support of St Mary's in this difficult economic climate.*

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

St Mary's will re-open on this Monday, 15th for private prayer and reflection - 11.00-3.00 weekdays

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

Please continue to pray for

Estelle Barks
John Bowers
Rosemary Clark
John Conway
Harry Palmer
Mike Ridley

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