

Voice from the vicarage April 29th 2021

Dear All,

Last Sunday night a few of us gathered around the 'telly' to watch the first episode of a series about Jesus called 'The Chosen'. The character studies of various people who necessarily appear as sort of 'bit parts' in the Gospels, primarily concerned as they are with the actions, sayings and supremely, the death and resurrection of the Lord, are imaginative and fascinating. In the first episode we encountered Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus and Peter (and their wives) and Matthew.

Life 'B.C.' and 'A.D.'

If we are not told much of their personal stories in the Bible itself, that they *had* a life before they encountered Jesus is certainly true. I invited the folk present to think of B.C. and A.D. not so much in terms of the years and time lines that relate to the Lord's birth, but in terms of the change in the lives of the characters depicted. What was their life like 'B.C.', before they met Christ, and how does their life change, and keep changing after they encounter him. (A.D.)



'A.D.' people

Inevitably of course it leads to another question. How does *my* A.D. life compare to my B.C. life? For many of us of course our life with Christ began at the font as infants, and we have to catch up with what it means to have been united with him in love at our baptism as we grow. Sadly, many who have been taken to the font never catch up with that union with Jesus. It remains as a buried treasure. For others 'stuff happens'. It's fairly easy to lose sight of its meaning and its joy.

Anyway, **you'd be welcome to watch episode 2 in the vicarage on Sunday @ 5.** But you can of course download the Chosen App and watch it at your leisure.

Quite a bit of headbutting!

In his sermon last Sunday morning about the Good Shepherd, Deacon Russell posed the question posed by St John in his first letter: if I do not love others "in truth and action" how can I truthfully claim to be Christian? That love is a duty, that best and better flows from a deep personal life with the Lord and the acceptance of his personal love for us. The task of the Church, *our* task, is to help people hear the Lord calling them by name and to help them recognize his blessed voice.



Icon of the Good Shepherd who shows his goodness by his wounds

Even today in the Holy Land, sheep from various flocks are kept together overnight and then in the morning the shepherds arrive and begin to call out their sheep. The sheep recognize their own shepherd's voice and follow him out to pasture. They say that a new sheep tends to scurry around the pen **headbutting the walls in confusion and anxiety** until they get to know the voice of their own shepherd....I have to admit this old sheep has done a bit of that headbutting over the years even way beyond my 'newness'. So many voices calling, so many false shepherds....

I've had to train and re-train, learning again and again to stay close, lifting up my ears to hear the voice of the Saviour above the melee...

There are a few events coming up that I want to highlight:

Next Saturday May 8th at 11 a.m. Christ Church is hosting a mass on the day the Church sets aside to celebrate the life and wisdom of the 14th century mystic Julian of Norwich, author of the 'Revelations of Divine Love'. 'Walled up' in a small cell in Norwich, her life and influence has and continues to be considerable. All are welcome.

As the fifty days of Eastertide continue we will soon celebrate the **Ascension of the Lord**. This is on **Thursday 13th**. We will have our usual Thursday evening mass at 6.30 p.m. and continue the celebration the following Sunday.

PENTECOST! SUNDAY MAY 23rd

Those of you who have been around a little while will know that we have celebrated the sending of the Holy Spirit in a lovely way at Christ Church. On the day when the Holy Spirit gave the apostle the gift of many languages that allowed them to speak to all who would listen, people from many nations, we have had members of the parish community speaking in many languages during the liturgy, either their 'native' language or one they have learned. This year we will invite people to join in the praying of the **Lord's Prayer** in this way. More of this over the next week or so! The 10 am service will be followed by a **shared lunch** and we hope folk will bring dishes that reflect the many heritages from which we come.

Later that same day there will be the annual ecumenical service for local churches at the **Sydney Road Baptist Church @ 5 p.m.**

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Plans for the vicarage....Next time you're in the foyer of the Bardin Centre have a look at the plans for the extension to the vicarage which will become 'The Parish House' when we hand over the Bardin Centre and land behind to the Sydney Rd Community School in October.

Our life On Line Just so you know, these days we are filming our services and streaming them on the parish Facebook page (and my own) and then putting the link up on our parish website rather than uploading them to YouTube. For your interest, last Sunday's service has had 480 views, though it doesn't mean the 480 all watched the whole service!! But isn't that encouraging?

And finally, thank you to 'the Lambs' last Sunday who, following the Good Shepherd theme, presented me with a sheep face complete with real woolly wool, reminding me that I may be an under Shepherd of the Lord, but like them, and all of you, I remain a sheep, one of his sheep. The mask did seem to have a very big mouth



though.... Much love, ++L

On my fridge...reminding me to keep my big mouth shut occasionally