

Voice from the Curatage – 23rd June, 2022

Hello there!

As many of you will be aware, our dear Bishop Lindsay is currently taking some well-deserved leave, and we trust is enjoying his time away in Italy, Spain, and England. Let us keep him in our prayers, and pray particularly that he has a restful and refreshing holiday, and safe travels. In the meanwhile, I write to you with a 'Voice' not from the vicarage but from the curatage. (The latter being a word I'm convinced is real, despite my computer's incessant squiggly red lines telling me otherwise...). It is a great privilege and joy to act as the parish locum over the coming weeks, and I am terribly grateful to the wonderful ministry and leadership team for their invaluable work and assistance in 'keeping the show on the road'. As +Lindsay remarked at the end of Mass on Sunday, we are tremendously blessed to be in a position to keep the strong, daily rhythm of worship going, even when the parish priest is away. This daily pattern of praise, which stands as the steady heartbeat of this community, is a truly special thing. And, as we hear the bell chime before every service, may we be reminded of the gentle (but constant) witness to the adoration of God in this place that it is to the hustle and bustle of Sydney Road.

Speaking of a witness on Sydney Road...

What a wonderful thing it was, this past Sunday night, to gather in the Lamb and Flag café for a service of Exposition, Adoration, and Benediction, to mark the Feast of Corpus Christi!



With tables cleared out, cushions and kneelers on the floor, the barista's service counter turned into a makeshift altar, candles spread throughout the room, and a burning pot of incense sending plumes of fragrant smoke into the air, the café was almost unrecognisable. Almost. For it was still quite visibly the Lamb and Flag. It was still the home of a coffee machine ('The Beast'), a drinks fridge, and a toaster. It was still that same café that so many who live and work along Sydney Road have come to know and love... And yet, by the very presence of Our Lord in his Blessed Sacrament, and by that company of the faithful gathered in adoration, the place was transformed – transformed, if but for a time, into the house of God Almighty. How beautiful and fitting, then, that for that evening our wonderful café bore most powerful

witness, in full view of Sydney Road, to its principal aim: to bring people to the worship of God, and invite them to enter the mystery.

During the service, I was particularly struck by a remarkable phenomenon that seemed to be taking place. As occurs most Sunday evenings, dozens of people passed by the window on their way out for the night. More often than not, especially when travelling as a group, you can hear them coming. And similarly, more often than not, their conversations continue as they stroll past the window. But not this time. This time, in a truly striking fashion, it seemed that nearly every person who passed the window peered in and stopped. Chatter became hushed, movement slowed down, and it was as if that heavy blanket of intense stillness that lay over the room stretched out onto the footpath and overshadowed the hubbub of the street. I have wondered, upon reflection, how many passers-by knew what was going on in that place, or upon whom they gazed as they glimpsed the consecrated Host in the monstrance. Perhaps none. And yet, albeit for a moment, their attentions were – as ours – fixed on him whom we know as Lord, as we together beheld the sacred. What a beautiful thought that is.

But that's not all for The Lamb!

As well as the daily rhythm of worship, so too does our 'Lamb B&B' (Bible and Beer) service continue on Sundays at 6pm in the café. The structure of the worship will change a little over the coming weeks, as we enjoy some time spent in a gentle group *Lectio Divina*, and also hear some testimonies from several members of our parish community about their experiences and lives as disciples of Jesus, and about the shape of their various ministries. What a wonderful thing it will be to hear about the different forms of ministry to which the Lord calls the members of his Church! And, as always, our B&B service will continue to begin and end with praise and worship through music. (A particular thanks to Mick Pope for his invaluable contribution in leading this music ministry).

And last, but certainly not least...

This coming Wednesday is the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. A major feast in the church Kalendar, this season of Pentecost is commonly set aside for ordinations. As we, whether in lay ministry or ordained ministry, look to the examples of these two great saints, let us remember to pray for those preparing for ordination at this time, and for those discerning a call to the same. Perhaps we might also reflect on the particular ministry to which God is calling us, individually?



With love from the Curatage,
Deacon Jack