

**THE PARISH OF TIDENHAM  
&  
ST BRIAVELS & HEWELSFIELD**

**A LENTEN PILGRIMAGE  
AT HOME**



**BOOK TWO    DAYS 21 - 40**



**THE PARISH OF TIDENHAM &  
ST BRIAVELS with HEWELSFIELD & BROCKWEIR**

**INVITE YOU TO JOIN ...**

**A LENTEN PILGRIMAGE AT HOME**

**INTRODUCTION**

**HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET**

Find a quiet, comfortable place at a convenient moment of your day when you are unlikely to be disturbed. You'll need to set aside only fifteen minutes each day, (of course, you may take as long as you like!)

Key verses are selected for you and printed in your booklet, but you may like to have your Bible to hand to read around the verses, and understand their context and how they fit in the whole passage.

You may also like to keep a note each day of what God is nudging you to learn or what action you will take or what gladdens your heart. The wealth of God's lessons over the next forty days will be amazing.

When Jesus taught about God's love and his kingdom values he often used everyday objects his audience would have known well: salt, lamps, sheep, a lost coin, a cup of cold water.

As we seek to notice God more in our lives 24/7, we discover that our everyday objects still have lots to tell us about his love and his purposes for us. He calls us from one week's end to the other... and all through the week in between.

So, let's follow him through our own homes, noticing him as we journey on our pilgrimage through ordinary things together. Let's look, listen and learn.

**A LENTEN PRAYER**

Dear Lord

Twenty days into Lent when my resolve  
is weakened and temptation strong,  
help me focus on you and the love & forgiveness you offer. Help  
me each day to pray (upward), to search my  
heart (inward) and to give to others (outward).

As I journey through Lent may it bring me to a deeper  
understanding and knowledge of you, my Lord and God. Amen

## KITCHEN

### DAY 21, TUESDAY TEAPOT

*You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, "You did not make me"?*

*Can the pot say to the potter, "You know nothing"?*

Isaiah 29:16

*Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

Isaiah 64:8

*So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.*

1 Corinthians 10:31

### TAKE A MOMENT

Have you a favourite teapot? My old brown teapot is almost part of the family. It sits, on a tray, ready to do what it was made for...making tea! But it's much more than that. It pours out a welcome to visitors. It helps me come to in the morning. It quenches my thirst and is a comfort in times of grief, worry or stress. This humble, ordinary, old, brown teapot is there when the family gathers to discuss things of importance or celebrate together. It's a part of almost every meal.

### RESPONDING

*Inward:* Such an ordinary thing, a teapot, yet it's an important part of daily life. Think about the lives you will touch today...can you accept that God has made you to be an important part of the lives of those around you? Our ordinary is his extraordinary!

*Upward:* Give thanks and praise that you are made to be who you are and ask that God will show you how you can be of daily service to him, building the kingdom in ordinary and vital ways.

*Outward:* Think about the potter who made your teapot. Think too about the tea: how it is grown, picked, transported and sold. Give thanks for all the people involved and offer a prayer for them. Thank God for them and for the part such a humble object plays in our lives. If possible, take time to sit and share a cup of tea with somebody.



## DAY 22, WEDNESDAY CUP/MUG

*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

2 Corinthians 4:7

### TAKE A MOMENT

Another ordinary thing we find in our kitchens is our favourite mug or cup; another of the potter's wares!

What do you like to drink first thing in the morning or last thing at night? Make yourself a drink now and hold your cup in your hands. Feel its shape and think about what it is for. Take a drink. Is your cup empty now? Still full? Warm? Cool?

It's so obvious: cups are made to be filled so we can drink from them. But if we never drank the tea, coffee or cocoa, we'd never be able to fill them again.

The treasure of God's blessing that we receive is not just for us...it's to be shared. We are filled by the Holy Spirit and we empty ourselves out in living our lives for the Lord, in giving to others, so we can be filled again, over and over. The Potter has created us for receiving his blessings, holding his treasures of grace and love and giving his gifts forward. And when we run dry, we return to him and he refills our emptiness.

## RESPONDING

*Inward:* Think for a moment of the treasures we are given day by day to hold in the 'clay jar' of our hearts. Is it words of hope, the encouragement of being deeply loved, the joy of total forgiveness?

Or perhaps you feel empty today because you have given until you have nothing left to give.

*Upward:* Spend time in praise and thanksgiving. Ask the Lord to fill you to overflowing with the treasure of his gifts and blessings.

*Outward:* Have a chat with somebody you haven't spoken to for ages. Tell them how much you value their friendship and pass on a sense of hope and joy.

## DAY 23, THURSDAY CUP/MUG (AGAIN)

*"Abba, Father," Jesus said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."*

Mark 14:36

*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*

Matthew 26:28

## TAKE A MOMENT

Hold your empty cup. This is a very different moment from yesterday: here we discover the stark vision of obedience and sacrifice. Here is honest prayer: *Father, you can do anything, so please don't let this happen to me.* This is followed with the startling *BUT...not what I want, BUT what you know is best.* This complete emptying out, this total obedience of Jesus as he begins the journey to the cross, for us, for our forgiveness, is mind blowing. What a Saviour!

## RESPONDING

Spend time just holding your empty cup and marvelling at the love of God we find in Christ Jesus our Lord. You may like to use these words as a prayer.

My Lord, what love is this  
That pays so dearly  
That I, the guilty one  
May go free!

And now, this love of Christ  
Shall flow like rivers  
Come wash your guilt away  
Live again!

*Graham Kendrick Copyright © 1989 Make Way Music*

## DAY 24, FRIDAY FOOD WASTE CADDY

*Moses told them, "It's the bread God has given you to eat. And these are God's instructions: 'Gather enough for each person, about two quarts per person; gather enough for everyone in your tent.'"*

*The People of Israel went to work and started gathering, some more, some less, but when they measured out what they had gathered, those who gathered more had no extra and those who gathered less weren't short*  
— *each person had gathered as much as was needed.*

Exodus 16:15-18

*When the people had eaten their fill, Jesus said to his disciples, "Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted." They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves. The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done.*

John 6:12-15

## TAKE A MOMENT

Look into your food waste caddy. Are the contents reasonable, could they have been reduced or avoided?

Did you know: one in eight people in the UK go hungry every day, yet an average family wastes £700 worth of food every

year. Thankfully, we are beginning to reduce our food waste by recycling (by 7% per person) but we could do more.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand appears in all four Gospels: a boy steps forward with five fish and two bread rolls; Jesus prays and the crowd are fed. Over twelve baskets of leftovers are collected. Nothing is wasted.

We have a generous God who showers us with gifts, including our 'daily bread'. He knows what we need and is willing and able to help.

However, though we live in a world where God has given sufficient food for everyone, many still go hungry, even in our own towns and cities. Are we content to stand by and let this happen?

The little boy didn't have much but gave what he had – and Jesus did amazing things with it. Let's allow the Lord to use us to help others.

## **RESPONDING**

*Inward:* Do I eat too much? Do I waste food? Let me use this period of Lent to re-examine my attitude to food.

*Upwards:* Give thanks to God for his generous creation, for his continuing love towards us. Ask his forgiveness for the way we squander his gifts. Ask for his support so that we can play our

part in bringing about a world where food is shared equitably and no one goes hungry.

*Outward* Pray for those who harvest and produce our food. Let's support those who have difficulty in feeding themselves and their families: through the local Food Bank; charities feeding the hungry and homeless throughout the world; Fair Trade for farmers and producers.

Generous God,  
Thank you for our food.  
Help us to take only sufficient for our own needs,  
To be aware of the needs of others,  
And to work towards a world where none will go hungry.  
In Jesus name. Amen



## DAY 25, SATURDAY KITCHEN BIN

*He has removed our sins as far from us as the East is from the West.*

Psalm 103:12

### TAKE A MOMENT

Sometimes it's hard to realise that forgiveness is complete. Do you ever find yourself dwelling on old mistakes and hurts that God has already set aside 'as far as East is from West'? If God has forgiven us, we really must forgive ourselves! The contents of our kitchen bins go out to the big bin, then off in the bin lorry. We'd never think of going down to the dump, digging it up and bringing it home again. Let's leave our rubbish/sin buried deep in God's merciful, unfailing forgiveness.

### RESPONDING

Let's respond to the Lord's forgiveness and mercy by stopping the guilt-trip of self-blame and move forward in freedom and joy. Today. Tomorrow. Always. Let's tell the Lord how much we love him.

## DAY 26, SUNDAY MEASURING JUG

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge —that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3:17-19

### TAKE A MOMENT

A successful recipe often demands careful, accurate measurement. There's quite a difference between a teaspoon or a tablespoon of salt and two mls or two litres of milk! Our measuring jugs are a vital part of our kitchen equipment.

But how do we measure the love of Jesus? Well, we can't. Even St Paul seems thrown by the concept. *'I pray that you can grasp the immensity of Christ's love...though it's way beyond all human ability to know it!'*

Not a drip nor a dribble, not a sprinkle or a spritz. It's a tsunami! The love of Christ Jesus is beyond imagining. Let's ask the Lord to fill us to the brim with the power of his unfailing, immeasurable love.

## RESPONDING

*Inward:* Sit in silence and open your heart, mind and soul to the thundering, powerful love God has for you, has always had for, will always have for you. It's never going to run out.

*Upward:* Praise him in prayer, song or dance! Let your heart overflow with joy in his presence.

*Outward:* Pass on God's love today by reminding somebody how much they mean to you and to God!



## DAY 27, MONDAY CARVING KNIFE

*God means what he says. What he says goes.  
His powerful Word is sharp as a surgeon's scalpel,  
cutting through everything, whether  
doubt or defence, laying us open to listen and obey.  
Nothing and no one can resist God's Word. We can't get away  
from it—no matter what.*

Hebrews 4:12-13

## TAKE A MOMENT

Have you ever noticed how a Bible passage that you have read repeatedly and know quite well suddenly takes on new power and meaning? Sometimes it seems that God is speaking directly to us, challenging our conscience about an attitude or an action that has fallen far short of his standards. We know excuses are useless...we've been caught, fair and square. It's extraordinarily powerful, extremely humbling and brings us to our knees to seek forgiveness. Sorry, Lord!

On other occasions, words jump out at us to give us an amazing insight into a stressful or problematic situation we're struggling with. Words of comfort suddenly are fresh and clear and full of dynamic promise. Thank you, Lord!

## RESPONDING

Hark, my soul, it is the Lord;  
'tis thy Saviour, hear his word;  
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,  
'Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?

'I delivered thee when bound,  
and, when wounded, healed thy wound;  
sought thee wandering, set thee right,  
turned thy darkness into light.



'Mine is an unchanging love,  
higher than the heights above,  
deeper than the depths beneath,  
free and faithful, strong as death.'

Lord, it is my chief complaint  
that my love is weak and faint;  
yet I love thee, and adore;  
O for grace to love thee more!

William Cowper

## DAY 28, TUESDAY    CLOCK

*He has made everything beautiful in its time.  
He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can  
fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

Ecclesiastes 3:11

## TAKE A MOMENT

There may be several clocks in your kitchen: on the wall, on your oven, on the microwave. If yours has a tick or a second hand, listen or watch for a minute as each second is measured out. Timing is crucial to our day and our cooking.

We often talk about a 'God shaped hole' in our hearts, meaning that we are never really comfortable until we connect with God. It seems that the writer of Ecclesiastes (traditionally, King Solomon) thought of this centuries before the birth of Jesus. We cannot hope to begin measuring eternity, but we can take joy in the fact that our Lord God is in our world's story from end to end.

## RESPONDING

*Upward:* Spend time praising God for the majesty of creation, from molecules to millennia and from gardens to galaxies.

*Inward:* Let's be comforted that God has put us in our time and in our place as part of his story for humanity. As we sit and listen to the tick of the clock, can we imagine the beat of love of God's heart for us?

*Outward:* Spend some time with somebody for whom time drags because of illness or frailty or loneliness. Be a comfort.



**DAY 29, WEDNESDAY    CARRIER BAG OF SHOPPING**

*Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Matthew 11:28–30

*As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem they came to a village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home.*

*Her sister Mary sat on the floor, listening to Jesus as he talked.*

*But Martha was the jittery type and was worrying over the big dinner she was preparing.*

*She came to Jesus and said, "Sir, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work?*

*Tell her to come and help me."*

*But the Lord said to her, "Martha, dear friend, you are so upset over all these details!*

*There is really only one thing worth being concerned about.*

*Mary has discovered it— and I won't take it away from her!"*

Luke 10:38-42

**TAKE A MOMENT**

Shopping would be a lot easier if somebody carried your bags in from the car and unloaded the items into the fridge and cupboards for us! Those bags just seem to become heavier and heavier as our energy ebbs away. A bit of a burden, really!

To be honest, life sometimes feels really burdensome. We struggle on, trying to get to the end of our to-do lists. Busy and burdened, the strange truth is we need to stop, just stop and take that moment to re-engage with Jesus. Sitting at his feet like Mary, we will learn life lessons that will last for ever. Then, when we begin to unpack our day, our burdens will seem less because we've gained a new, a heavenly perspective.

**RESPONDING**

Today, just sit quietly with Jesus for a while. Re-read the two passages above several times. What life-lessons are you taking away with you? Hold them close and treasure them as your day progresses.

## DAY 30, THURSDAY TABLE

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence  
of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil;  
my cup runneth over.*

Psalm 23:5

*The disciples followed Jesus' instructions to the letter,  
and prepared the Passover meal. After sunset, he and the  
Twelve were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, "I  
have something hard but important to say to you..."*

Matthew 26:19–21 (The Message)

## TAKE A MOMENT

Sit at your dining table/kitchen table. Remember meals you've had here: with family, friends, alone. Now remember times when you've eaten at other tables: in the homes of friends, on holiday or at a wedding celebration. Important things are said and done at meal times!

The Psalmist tells us of the overwhelming generosity of God. A feast-table of peace and plenty, the comfort and honour of God's anointing presence...who could ask for anything more? Or, as the Psalmist puts it: *My cup is full to overflowing.*

We also remember another meal, Jesus' last supper with his friends as they celebrate Passover. The events at this table have been remembered down the ages every time we celebrate Holy

Communion and we are aware of the shadows gathering as Jesus begins his journey to the cross.

## RESPONDING

*Upward:* Praise the Lord: for his blessings, his generosity, his reassurance and the hope he gives. For the 'hard but important' things he tells us and shows us. For the journey Jesus will undertake from Passover to Easter Day for us.

*Inward:* Marvel at how much we are loved, precious and blessed.

*Outward:* At each meal, take time to give heart-felt thanks for food, for family and friends, for faith and fellowship. And let's never forget those who are still hungry.

## OUT & ABOUT

## DAY 31, FRIDAY GARDEN

*Then God planted a garden in Eden, in the east. He put the Man he had just made in it. God made all kinds of trees grow from the ground, trees beautiful to look at and good to eat. The Tree-of-Life was in the middle of the garden, also the Tree-of-Knowledge-*

*of-Good-and-Evil. A river flows out of Eden to water the garden.... They heard God strolling in the garden in the evening breeze.*

Genesis 2:8-10, 3:8

*Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane & told his disciples, "Stay here while I go over there and pray."*

Matthew 26:36-38

## TAKE A MOMENT

If possible, try to spend time in a garden today. Sit still and let your senses come alive! What can you see, hear, smell, touch, taste that's so different from when you are indoors?

Gardens are special places. In the story of creation, God makes a perfect garden and Adam and Eve are tasked with caring for it and enjoying it. Our gardens may give us unending pleasure as we care for the soil, plants, trees and wildlife. It's easy to become so busy in our garden space that we forget to stop, stare, listen and enjoy the wonder all around us.

Gardens can also be our special, intimate places where we go for solitude and can find it easier to be close to God. Jesus chooses the garden of Gethsemane, wrapped in the darkness of late evening, to spend his last moments of freedom and solitude with his Heavenly Father. It was the place where he could truly

display his anguish and be totally honest about what the days ahead would hold for him.

Gardens are special places where we can experience the joy of oneness with God's natural world, or we can lay aside any pretence and truly bare our souls before our loving, listening God.

## RESPONDING

Let's pray:

As I still myself in this garden, move my heart with the calm, smooth flow of your grace. Let the river of your love run through my soul. May my soul be carried by the current of your love, toward the wide, infinite ocean of heaven.

Stretch out my heart with your strength, as you stretch out the sky above the earth. Smooth out any wrinkles of hatred or resentment. Enlarge my soul that I may know more fully your truth, your love, your life. Amen

Based on a prayer by Gilbert of Hoyland, 1491-1556



## DAY 32, SATURDAY BIRD-FEEDER

*Birds find nooks and crannies in Your house, sparrows and swallows make nests there. They lay their eggs and raise their young, singing their songs in the place where we worship. God-of-the-Angel-Armies! King! God!*

*How blessed they are to live and sing there!*

Psalm 84:3-4

*Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowler.*

Psalm 124:7

*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.*

Matthew 10:29

### TAKE A MOMENT

Do you feed the birds with scraps left over from a meal or by filling up a birdfeeder with seeds? Like me, you probably get a lot of joy from watching the birds at the feeder. When it's cold they feast frantically to consume as many calories as possible in order to survive the coming night.

In the Bible we read that Noah sent out a dove from the Ark to search for dry land; ravens brought food to Elijah in hiding and all four Gospel writers describe the Holy Spirit descending as a dove on Jesus when he was baptised by John.

Indeed, birds have also inspired artists and composers throughout history. Geese alerted Rome's residents to danger, saving the city. Canaries in coalmines alerted workers to the dangers of gas.

The robin and the goldfinch point us towards the sacred. Both the robin and the goldfinch have splashes of red in their plumage. According to legend the robin acquired his by tugging at the thorns in Jesus' brow. The goldfinch feeds on thistles. This has led to an association of this bird with thorns and the crucifixion of Christ.

Birds are part of God's creation as are we. We have special responsibilities to live according to His commands, and to witness to his Son who has redeemed us by his death on the cross.

### RESPONDING

*Inward:* Eagles (often found on lecterns) are renowned for their strength and acute vision. Give me the strength to serve you fully and the vision to see you more clearly in the people and objects that are around me.

*Upwards:* Lord God thank you for the birds of the world, for the birds that are around us in our daily lives. They symbolize freedom. Let us enjoy and celebrate the freedom that comes from knowing and loving you.

*Outward:* As we watch the birds feed in our gardens, we also remember the hungry of the world, those who hunger for food and those who hunger for you, O Lord. Help me to be mindful of them and prayerfully generous.

## **DAY 33, SUNDAY    MUD**

*Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?”*

*Jesus said, “You’re asking the wrong question. You’re looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do. We need to be energetically at work for the One who sent me here, working while the sun shines. When night falls, the workday is over. For as long as I am in the world, there is plenty of light. I am the world’s Light.” He said this and then spat in the dust, made a clay paste with the saliva, rubbed the paste on the blind man’s eyes, and said, “Go, wash at the Pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “Sent”).  
The man went and washed—and saw.*

John 9:1-7

## **TAKE A MOMENT**

When was the last time you got your hands dirty making mud pies? Remember the fun when we didn’t care about little things like clean finger-nails or muddy knees? I for one never imagined that mud pies would speak to me of Jesus!

Reading this passage again I was suddenly reminded of how the Lord is the Potter and we are the clay. As Jesus remodels this man ‘blind from birth’ with mud made from the dust of the earth (remember Adam) and his own spit he is by word and action showing that he is our Messiah, the Light of the World, the Son of God.

## **RESPONDING**

Find some mud or clay and spend time moulding it into shapes that please you. How does it feel between your fingers? Are you having fun yet? Remember, the word ‘enjoy’ means to be filled with joy.

Imagine God shaping us with love. As you play with your mud, pray for every individual you know who needs God’s healing touch. May they find new joy.

Pray, too, that God will help us to remodel the unjust structures of our world. May their darkness be flooded with the Light of Christ.

## DAY 34, MONDAY WEEDS

*A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed,  
some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it.*

*Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down  
roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some  
fell in the weeds; as it came up,  
it was strangled by the weeds.*

*Some fell on good earth, and produced a  
harvest beyond his wildest dreams.*

Matthew 13:3-8

### TAKE A MOMENT

In Spring our gardens suddenly explode into growth. We prepare the ground for our new seeds, which can involve initial weeding, digging to loosen the soil, riddling to make sure it's soft, and feeding it with compost. Then we sow our seed, water and wait. Then the weeds come back and if we don't keep hoeing or pulling them up, our poor seeds may well be swamped, strangled and starved.

Keeping an eagle eye on the seed-bed of our lives is vital. If we are careless or complacent, the weeds of wrong thinking, warped attitudes and poor judgment will stifle our efforts for living the Kingdom life. But of course, we need to submit ourselves to the hands of the Master Gardener, and ask him to

weed out the sins that cling and prune back all the dead wood. Then we'll have room to thrive and energy to grow as we should.

### RESPONDING

***Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. (The Jesus Prayer)***

***O Lord, forgive what I have been, sanctify what I am, and order what I shall be. Amen.***

Let us confess, take time to wait and know in the very deepest, darkest places of our hearts that we are forgiven and loved beyond measure.



## DAY 35, TUESDAY PUDDLES

*At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked,  
“Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?  
He called a little child to him,  
and placed the child among them. And he said:  
“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little  
children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore,  
whoever takes the lowly position of this child  
is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.  
And whoever welcomes one such child  
in my name welcomes me.*

Matthew 8:1-5

### TAKE A MOMENT

When did you last paddle in a puddle just for the sheer joy of it? Find one today, and rediscover the inner-child. Or, if it's been really dry recently, get out your watering can and make a bit of a splash. So, boots on or feet bare or just fingers in a bowl of water, let's get wet!

Jesus wants us to change and become 'child-like' (as opposed to 'childish'). So what's so great about child-likeness? Perhaps it means recapturing innocence in place of our veneer of sophistication and cynicism. Or maybe it's about wonder: opening our eyes and our lives to experiencing new things with delight. Certainly, it is all about not thinking we've all (or even

any) of the answers, but are glad to come to the One who does and who will gladly teach us. It's those moments of shared stories and intimacies with God that we call prayer. It's relearning how to truly live in the moment now, rather than only hankering for the past or dreaming about the future.

### RESPONDING

*Inward:* Picture the child you were and imagine how much the Father loves you. As you splash about, or stand in the wet and wiggle your toes, or just play with the water in your bowl, allow yourself to really experience the moment. The feel of the water. The sound of the drips and trickles and swishes. The reflections caught in the still surface. No wonder we can know wonder!

*Upward:* Tell the Lord all about it.

*Outward:* Share joy with somebody today.



## LOUNGE/SITTING-ROOM

### DAY 36, WEDNESDAY LOUNGE WINDOW

*This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there's not a trace of darkness in him.*

*If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we're obviously lying through our teeth—we're not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin.*

*If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—simply come clean about them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself.*

*He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God—make a liar out of him.*

*A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.*

1 John 1:5-10

### TAKE A MOMENT

Look out of your lounge window. In my living room, my window is important to me. I see the colour of the garden, the busyness of birds, the line of mist following the river valley, some distant hills and the ever-changing sky. Take time to gaze outside.

My window lets in sunshine as well as beauty and I can go about my daily tasks in daylight. St Paul encourages us to take care to really understand how God wants us to live our lives: metaphorically walking in light, fully aware of everything around us, not stumbling and losing our way in darkness. Let's aim to be a light to others in our daily lives as we follow Christ Jesus. Oh, and let's remember not to hide our 'light' but share it as we live in our neighbourhoods and communities.

### RESPONDING

Longing for light, we wait in darkness  
Longing for truth, we turn to You.  
Make us Your own, Your holy people  
Light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!  
Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light!  
Shine in Your church gathered/scattered today.

Many the gift, many the people  
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another  
Making Your kingdom come.

Christ, be our light!  
Shine in our hearts.  
Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light!  
Shine in Your church gathered/scattered today.

Bernadette Farrell

*Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where  
you stand is holy ground.”*

Exodus 3:1-5

*Do you see what we've got? An unshakable kingdom!  
And do you see how thankful we must be?  
Not only thankful, but brimming with worship,  
deeply reverent before God. For God is not an indifferent  
bystander. He's actively cleaning house, torching all that needs  
to burn, and he won't quit until it's all cleansed.*

*God himself is Fire!*

Hebrews 12:29

## **DAY 37, THURSDAY FIRE**

*Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the  
priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert,  
and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.*

*And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from  
the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was  
burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.*

*Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight,  
why the bush does not burn."*

*So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look,  
God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses,  
Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."*

*Then He said, "Do not draw near this place.*

## **TAKE A MOMENT**

Are you sitting comfortably? It's so delightful to come in from the cold, sit down in our favourite chair and warm up in front of our fire or radiator, isn't it? Thank you, Lord, for those lovely moments, and the blessing of relaxation!

However, God's fire is also a sign of holiness and purity. The prophet Micah talks about the Lord being like a refining fire, burning away all the dross and making us like gold.

The burning bush caught Moses attention. He's on holy ground, because God is with him and he's about to launch Moses on the biggest adventure imaginable: taking a whole nation out of slavery and towards the Promised Land. It will take the rest of

Moses' life. This is a serious moment with eternal ramifications. It's certainly holy ground.

The fire of God burns within each one of us who follow him. Are we perhaps sometimes guilty of being just a little too comfy and complaisant in God's presence? He wants to uncover the pure gold of his purpose in each of us. Let's work with God as we go deeper and deeper with him this Lent.

### RESPONDING

This is holy ground. Sit with God. Worship him. Let's be brave and ask him to make us true gold for him.

And if he is calling us on a life-changing adventure of service, let's listen and trust and follow where he calls.

*Be, Lord, within me to strengthen me,  
without me to preserve, over me to shelter,  
beneath me to support, before me to direct,  
behind me to bring back, round about me to fortify.*

*Amen*

Lancelot Andrewes, 1555 - 1626

**DAY 38, FRIDAY    MUSIC                      (CD, RADIO, RECORD,  
INSTRUMENT)**

*Hallelujah!  
Praise God in his holy house of worship,  
praise him under the open skies;  
Praise him for his acts of power,  
praise him for his magnificent greatness;  
Praise with a blast on the trumpet,  
praise by strumming soft strings;  
Praise him with castanets and dance,  
praise him with banjo and flute;  
Praise him with cymbals and a big bass drum,  
praise him with fiddles and mandolin.  
Let every living, breathing creature praise God!*

*Hallelujah!*

Psalm 150:1-6 (The Message)

### TAKE A MOMENT

Let's thank the Lord for music!

Can you imagine a world without music? It's in every culture and we use music for such a wide variety of purposes: for pleasure and entertainment, for religious and ceremonial occasions and even as background, mood illustration in films and in advertisements.

Passed through tradition, music then became written down to preserve its form. Recorded on wax cylinders, Bakelite records, plastic discs, CDs and now downloaded on smart phones which can be linked to a hub, laptop or TV. Music gives us so much joy, whether simple or complex, nursery rhyme to folk song; protest music to jazz; pop to oratorio. Thanks be to God for his gifts of musical talents and skills!

Used wrongly music can manipulate, incite hostility and promote harmful ideologies. Let's be careful how we use God's gifts. Music can also be seen as the search for the sacred, filling the cracks between the mortal and the soul, speaking straight to the heart of things. Used correctly, music can transport us to the Heavenly realms, as we worship and sing out our love for the Lord.

Music can get our feet tapping. It makes us want to dance out our joy. It moves not just the heart, but the body too! Powerful thing, music.

## **RESPONDING**

Choose how you use music to respond to the greatness and love of God today: listen, worship, sing or dance. Praise the Lord!

## **DAY 39, SATURDAY FRIENDS**

*My command is this:*

*Love each other as I have loved you.*

*Greater love has no one than this:  
to lay down one's life for one's friends.*

*You are my friends if you do what I command.*

*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.*

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.*

*This is my command: Love each other.*

John 15:12-17

## **TAKE A MOMENT**

We bring our friends into our lounges to spend time together, relaxing, chatting and catching up. It's a good, comfortable place to be. Friends enrich our lives and we are blessed by them.

It's quite mind-blowing that Jesus calls his disciples (and by extension, each one of us) his friends. That I could be the intimate friend of the Son of God still rocks my world. And he commands us – not asks, no chance of a 'get-out' here – he *commands* us to love one another. It's a love that is

characterised by sacrifice, putting others first, and even laying down our lives for one another. After all, he did!

Of course, Jesus isn't just talking about an elite inner circle of his disciples. He is commanding that every one of his followers is characterised by this same self-sacrificing love. That's supposed to be our defining feature, recognisable to all. How often corporately and individually we have missed the mark.

*Let us all in thee inherit,  
let us find the promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be.  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
set our hearts at liberty.*

Charles Wesley, 1747

## RESPONDING

Think, confess, thank, worship and ask. Speak to some friends today and let them know they are treasured.

*Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heav'n, to earth come down,  
fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art.  
Visit us with thy salvation;  
enter ev'ry trembling heart.*

*Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit  
into ev'ry troubled breast.*

**SUNDAY  
NEWS**



**DAY 40,  
PALM**



*The disciples brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks on it's back and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.*

*When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:*

*"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"*

*"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,*

*"Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"*

*"I tell you," he replied,*

*"if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."*

Luke 19:35-40

## TAKE A MOMENT

It's like a news report, this account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. There's incident, drama, tension. There are crowds cheering and the political/religious spokesmen trying to put a spoke in the works.

Jesus has a ready answer for them. This is his moment of earthly Kingship...the Prince of Peace has taken to the stage on the turbulent streets of Jerusalem. This will help to precipitate all the events of Holy Week.

We cannot 'un-know' what's about to happen to Jesus in the next few days. It's easy to become jaded and blasé about it. Let's

be open to the sweep and force of Christ's Passion and let's learn to love more fully in response.

As we listen or read the latest daily news offerings, what is our reaction? What would Jesus make of it, if he were beside us, listening in? Is God speaking to us through world events and local issues? The constant challenge is not to duck out but to engage in prayer and action.

## RESPONDING

*Inward:* Imagine you are part of the scene in John's news report above. How do you feel?

*Upward:* Talk to the Lord in prayer about this stunning moment of history.

*Outward:* Let's engage with the news positively, prayerfully and practically and never tire of living out our Good News, day to day.



## GOSPEL READING FOR PALM SUNDAY - MARK 11: 1-11

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.'"

They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, some people standing there asked, "What are you doing, untying that colt?" They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

"Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.



## TIDENHAM PARISH ONLINE LINKS AND CONTACTS

With grateful thanks  
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*"where the river flows everything will live"*