

St Patrick's Parish Bulletin



10th Sunday after Trinity
16th August 2020

The Rector is away so this week's service was led by Julie Thompson and the preacher was Stuart Lloyd.

Reading – Matthew Chapter 15 verses 21-28

Address

We are all too aware of confinement during this pandemic. There were those who were totally confined to their homes because they were shielding. Many of us were very confined at the start, only venturing out for essential shopping. Then there was the confinement of only being allowed to go a certain distance for exercise, the confinement of not being allowed to travel far and still the confinement about foreign travel. We are no longer confined in that we can return to the church but when we do, the way we worship will be confined.

What about confinement and faith? Well, in an obvious way it has relevance: core to the Christian faith is the belief that humanity is confined by its vulnerability, brokenness and sinfulness. We believe that an important part of God's purpose is not just to ease this 'lockdown', but to remove it, and to open the way to fulness of life – thus the ministry and mission of Jesus.

Yet can we look at confinement in another way? Is there not the tendency to confine God, to reduce Him to how we want Him to be, to have Him in a box that we can manage? Do we not also confine the extent of what He may be doing and confine those through whom He may be working? I doubt if we have fully grasped the truth of that children's song 'Our God is a great big God', nor the danger of that phrase 'our God' as if, in some way, we can control him. However, God breaks all our confinements.

Looking at the Old Testament, it does seem there is confinement. God chose Abraham to be father of a great nation. God confined his choice to a particular people – the Jews. And there is a strong sense of them being confined – they were not to mix with others - with foreigners – and, indeed, judgement was evoked for such behaviour. They were to protect their identity. Yet this identity was to be maintained and strengthened for a wider purpose. Abraham's call was ultimately for that wider purpose which we read in Genesis – that all peoples on earth will be blessed through him: no confinement. And again, in Isaiah, the call to the servant of the Lord is this *"...it is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth..."*.

So, to our Gospel reading where there appears to be confinement. We note first that Jesus went away to Tyre and Sidon – that is to Gentile, non-Jewish territory – a hint of non-confinement. There, a Canaanite woman confronted him. 'Canaanite' is the biblical term for those from whom Jews were expected keep separate. What was Jesus to do? Already earlier in the Gospel we heard him tell the disciples when sending them out *"...do not go among the gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans but go rather to the lost sheep of Israel..."*.

So, as in the Old Testament, Jesus seemed to share the focus of confining his ministry to the Jews, at least in this phase of his work. Yet he was now confronted by this 'outsider'. What followed is open to different interpretations, but not in question is the woman's anguish, determination and faith. She addressed Jesus as 'Lord and son of David', a Messianic title. She managed to go much further in her recognition of Jesus than so many of his fellow Jews. Her cry for help resulted in Jesus not answering her at all. Uncaring? Surely not. Speechless in the face of such recognition and faith – maybe? Wrestling with his set focus, but now a clear desire to reach out – maybe? For the disciples it is clear – a nuisance, send her away. Jesus did not take that route, and he engaged further with her: "...I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel...". Yes, that is true, but now that phase seemed to be superceded. The woman further drew it out with her heartfelt cry of faith "...Lord, help me...". Jesus answered "...it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs..." would seem to be a real put down, and so much out of character. Could it be that he was rather musing on what others might say in this situation, and that he was intent in drawing out her determination and faith? Then that is what happened "...Yea Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table...", so he can proclaim "...Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish...". Her daughter was instantly healed: in the end there was no confinement.

This was true in all his ministry. Others wanted him to confine his outreach. However, he reached out to Samaritans, Roman soldiers, tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes & women of ill repute, leprosy sufferers and other outcasts, and, in his last act, to a thief and terrorist. No confinement.

In our epistle reading, in the early Church there was a strong move to confine the Gospel to Jews. Paul was quite clear that it had to be extended to Gentiles. Yet he was also clear that this did not mean that God rejected the Jews. God would go out beyond the present to include the Jews. Paul spoke again of the reality of God's non-confined outreach when, in Romans, he told how creation itself would be liberated from decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God, and again, in Ephesians, when he spoke of God's will "...to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ...". No confinement.

We cannot suppose that God is confined to a certain way of working: confined to working through certain people – those of good standing, those from a particular religious outlook. God is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think and goes far beyond all our confinements. We can look at our world, and our hopes are confined. We can look at human history, and our hopes can be confined. We can look to the future, and our hopes may be confined. We are confined by our humanity, frailty and smallness. God is not confined. He is ahead and beyond, beckoning us on to what he is doing – Kingdom come. And maybe Kingdom life is life without any confinement.

Amen

Prayers

Heavenly Father, we thank you for listening to us, caring for us and answering our prayers. We acknowledge that you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but grateful that you know us as your loved children, and we can call you Father.

We bring before you our troubled world. Help us support those who are struggling at this time, our thoughts turn to the people of Beirut. Many of whom are mourning, recovering from injury, loss of home or livelihood. Bless and protect all those who are working to provide aid. Help us be people of compassion and action.

Father, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father God, we pray for our Church. Thank you for our leaders, pastors and friends. We especially bring before you the needs of Andrew, Allison, Henry and little Charlotte. May they experience the joy you bring through Charlotte, even through the sleepless nights and daily challenges. Help us celebrate with them and support them at this time.

We bring before you the needs and concerns of others in our community. Thinking of those who have recently received A Level results or who nervously await results of their GCSEs. Help those who are happy with the results awarded, have your plans for their lives in mind when making choices. For those who are disappointed, help them seek and trust you to show them the next steps forward. We thank you that our hope is in you. You hold the world in your hand and our cares in your heart. Help us remember that you have plans for us, and they are plans to prosper us, to give hope and a future.

We also bring before you those on our hearts who need your healing hand. Those struggling spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally and financially. In our congregation we remember, Freda, Jean, Katie, David, Helen, Kate, Eleanor, Desi, Derek and the Hamilton family as they grieve for Walter.

Father in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Finally, we bring before you the needs of schools, businesses, churches and community groups trying to get back to business now that lockdown restrictions are being relaxed. Help those who are putting in place protocols and procedures to support a safe return to activity. We pray especially for schools and churches and, in particular, our Select Vestry when making decisions and putting safety measures in place. We thank you that we can meet in this virtual way, but we are also thankful that we yearn to return and meet up physically together.

Merciful Father accept these our prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

The Church is not the
building, its the people, its
not just the gathering, its
also the scattering...

A Prayer for VJ Day

God our Father, in the dying and rising of your Son Jesus Christ, you have brought life and salvation out of cruelty and death. We mark Victory in Japan in gratitude for the courage of the Allied forces who suffered for freedom in the Far East campaign and in sorrow for all that hinders the coming of your kingdom of peace. Give us wisdom to learn from the bitter memories of war, and hearts that long for the unity of all nations. We ask all this in the name of Jesus, in whom there is no east or west, no north or south, but one fellowship of love across the whole earth.

Amen



We are on YouTube at 11.30am at

www.youtube.com/channel/UC6tcPjZbMe0muLYrskLvbbQ/videos

or via the website

www.stpatricksbroughshane.com. – Noticeboard then click on the Service you require

or on **Facebook** through our Facebook page

You can also listen to the Service on the **telephone** after 1pm on Sunday on **028 2517 0014** (*calls are charged at local rate*)



And every **Monday** at 12 noon on **Facebook** join us for readings and prayers.

A Question of Faith

Our midweek talks continue on

19th August - Faith and the Bible

Rev Dr Peter Sanlon

26th August - Faith and Suffering

Gareth Black

Join us at 12noon on Wednesdays via the links above



Weekly Collections - Standing Order, Cheque or Envelopes?



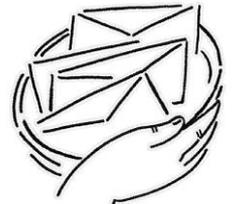
Would you consider setting up a Standing Order instead of envelopes? If so, please contact

Desi at darmstrong56@outlook.com or
the Rector at revdrapcampbell@gmail.com



You could send your usual offerings by cheque.

Of course, you can continue to put your offerings in the Church envelopes and hand them in later.



JustGiving™ is a way to financially support the ministry and mission of St Patrick's Broughshane as we share God's love with the community. Click the link on the Facebook page or Google Just Giving & search for:

'St Patricks Church, Broughshane'



St Patrick's catches up with Connor Diocese Holiday Bible Club's 'Cabin Fever'

Science experiments, warm-ups, games, puppets, crafts, memory verses, prayer activities and drama! We will compare the story of Noah's whilst on the ark for over a year with our experiences of lockdown.

As St Patrick's Broughshane we will meet each evening on **Zoom** from **Monday 17th – Friday 21st August** to catch up with the children who have taken part to see how they are getting on.

Make 'Cabin Fever' part of your August!!

I MADE A HUGE TO DO LIST FOR TODAY. I JUST CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHO'S GOING TO DO IT.



WHEN YOU CAN'T CONTROL WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND YOU, CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO CONTROL THE WAY IN WHICH YOU RESPOND.



Sometimes we need someone to simply be there. Not to fix anything, or to do anything in particular, but just to let us feel that we are cared for and supported.

- Unknown



