

Fourth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 10th July 2022



Dear Friends in Christ,

'Go and do likewise' (Luke 10: 37)

A strange thing happened to me this past week. You must decide in my recounting the story here whether you feel it is simply a moment of coincidence, or whether it was a 'God moment.' Personally, I genuinely believe it was the latter.

The story begins on my 60th birthday at the beginning of June, when a friend gave me a framed 3D piece of art, depicting a robin redbreast, made painstakingly from tiny curls of paper. My description is probably not doing it justice, but it is quite beautiful. The significance of the robin to our family is that, whenever we travel up to Epping Forest to visit my eldest son's grave, there is always a lively robin hopping around. This past week, however, on what would have been my son's 32nd birthday, whilst we could hear the robin in the cemetery, it failed to grace us with its physical presence.

On the way home, we stopped at Basingstoke for a meal and the subject of the invisible robin came up. As we walked back through the shopping precinct, my eye was drawn to an art shop. Just one hand-made card sat in the window in a display which looked like a tree. Incredibly, this solitary card showed an image of a robin with the caption *'I am always with you. x'*



On investigation, it transpires this was the very shop where the 3-D robin artwork had been purchased for my birthday. My friend having explained the significance of the robin at point of purchase, set the artist on a moving reflection of the robin's healing spiritual presence at the cemetery. Prompted by the Holy Spirit, she went on to create the robin card I'd seen in the window (incidentally of a shop I'd never visited before), with part of the text from Matthew: 28:20, which gives us Jesus' reassurance that He will always be with us, even to the end of time. It was just the salve my soul needed that day.

For me, the artist's response to the Holy Spirit in faithfully making the card and putting it in the shop window was as faithful as the Samaritan's beautiful response to the injured man who had been robbed by thieves. She had no idea that the bereaved woman whose son's grave was visited by the robin would ever see her window display, let alone on what would have been her son's birthday ... In the context of her own life, the artist was responding to Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan that we must '*Go and do likewise*' in whichever way we can to love one another as He first loved us.



'The Good Samaritan' by Vincent van Gogh

You must decide for yourselves whether you see this spiritual connection or discount it as a coincidence. Sometimes we are blessed to see the Holy Spirit at work through small faith-filled actions which people undertake in Christ's name without seeking the glory of recognition in this world. Each such action of love offered in blind faith for our neighbour means that we are living by Christ's standards of love.

Jesus wants to know who we consider counts as 'neighbour.' His telling question comes right at the end of the story. Jesus is not asking who the Samaritan regarded as his neighbour. Instead Jesus is asking who turned out to *be* the neighbour of the man lying close to death in the road.

Through this parable, Jesus is really asking us the question, '*Who counts as our neighbour?*' The robin artist clearly followed a prompt of the heart in reflecting on the way the simple presence of a little bird could bring comfort to a grieving family. Without questioning the consequences of her loving action, she honoured the call of Christ to follow Him in His own compassionate and healing responses to strangers as much as to loved ones.

Can we recognise the hated Samaritan as our neighbour, just as the dying man did? Do we act on the Holy Spirit's prompts of our hearts, or do we ignore them. If we can't see the stranger as our neighbour or trust Jesus when He asks us to act in His grace, the answer might well be that *we* are the ones left on the road for dead when we come before Jesus at the end of time.



'The Good Samaritan' by Balthasar van Cortbemde

Yours, in the healing salve of Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Collect Prayer for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide
we may so pass through things temporal
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;
grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever,
Amen.



Luke 10: 25-37 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind;’ and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’” “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbour?”

In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’”

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Schedule of Services

Now that all national Coronavirus restrictions have been lifted, it is no longer necessary to book seats in our parishes for services. Neither is it mandatory for you to wear masks in church. However, Coronavirus is still very much with us. There are a number of people in our villages with it at present, so we are encouraging people to observe social distancing measures.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>10th July</i>			Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>17th July</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
<i>24th July</i>			Morning Worship	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
<i>27th July</i>			Mid-week Holy Communion		
<i>31st July</i>		5 th Sunday Benefice Holy Communion			
<i>7th August</i>	Morning Worship	Holy Communion	4pm - Café Church		
<i>14th August</i>			Holy Communion		Morning Worship
<i>21st August</i>	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	
<i>24th August</i>			Mid-week Holy Communion		
<i>28th August</i>			Morning Worship	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)