

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 22nd August 2021



Dear Friends in Christ,

‘Do you also wish to go away?’ (John 6: 67)

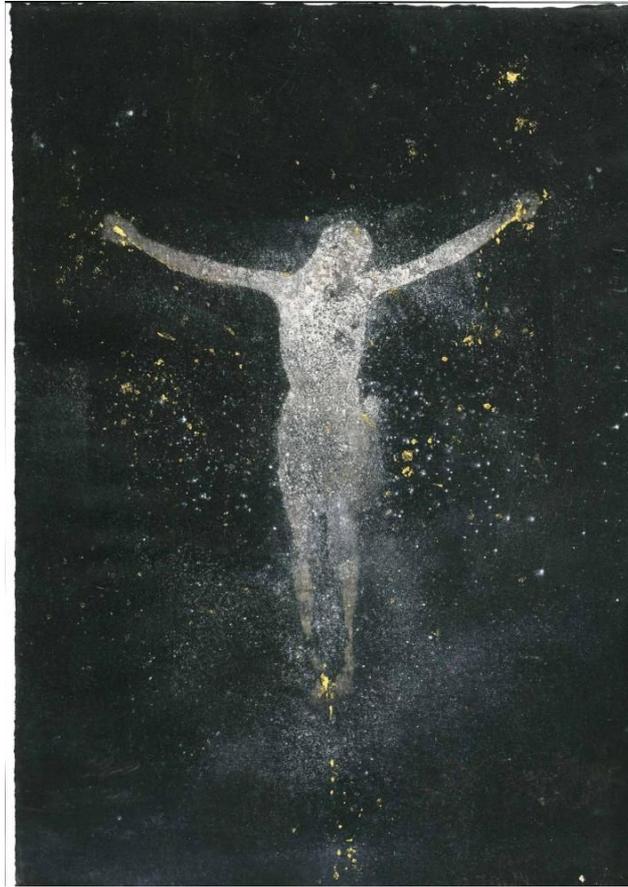
Our scripture reading from John this week concludes the powerful theme of Chapter 6 of his Gospel about Jesus being the food of life. From the story of the feeding of the 5000, John’s unfolding discourse has been revealing how Jesus’ ministry fielded many pertinent questions and has been using the powerful symbolism of food to jolt those who had begun following Him to make explicit choices in their lives. This latest imperative from Jesus, *‘Do you also wish to go away?’* is an unequivocal challenge to the people as to whether their faith in Him was strong enough to sustain them through the trials of living in and through the worst that humankind could hurl at them, and yet still feel able to call themselves followers of ‘The Way.’



Source – Bing.com

Given the tumultuous week the world has just traversed, we as Christians have had to face up to some horrific and testing questions: ‘How could God allow people to suffer the earthquake in Haiti? How can the Lord of love let innocent adults and a small child be gunned down in Plymouth? How can the tragic events unfolding in Afghanistan point us to a peaceful Creator and lover of souls? Closer to home, many of us have been trying to comprehend the tragic news of much loved 62-year-old supermarket employee, John Carroll, who was assaulted at Tesco Extra in Andover, and has since died from his injuries.

To all such devastating questions, Jesus asks us His own question: *'Do you also wish to go away?'* How strong is your faith? Will it withstand the travesties of a flawed and violent world? As Christians, we are asked whether we will hold fast and continue to strive to be the best that Jesus came to teach us to be? Or will we quiver and fall into the clutches of the deceiver the moment the going gets tough?



'The Still Point' by Nikola Samori

In the face of all these stark realities of our lives, my response to the sick, the frail, the frightened, the oppressed and those grieving is to point them to the cross of Christ. More than that, as a believer of The Way, and in response to Jesus' own question of us all, *'In the midst of your darkest hours are you going to run for the hills?'* is to point us all to the light and the hope of Easter – to the salvic resurrection from death and destruction of the word of God personified.

Simon Peter answers for us all as he looks squarely at Jesus and says *'Where else can we go but to You, the holy one of God.'*

Yours, in the shelter of Christ,

Jax

Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Top Tips from Austen Hooker



This week, Austen's attention has turned to the majestic wisteria which adorns many of your homes. A thing of great beauty when it blossoms in late spring and early summer, the wisteria needs careful attention throughout the year to ensure its pendulous and fragrant blooms do not disappoint! Whilst it is important to leave a young wisteria unpruned until it has covered the wall or garden structure you wish it to adorn, mature plants benefit from winter and summer pruning.

Cutting back the green shoots of this summer's growth to 5 or 6 leaves ensures the wisteria doesn't take over your entire house as it stretches out to gutters and window frames! Summer pruning also encourages the plant to focus on producing buds for next year, rather than expending its energies on growing in size.

Collect Prayer for the Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.



John 6:56-69 - Words of Eternal Life

Jesus said to them, 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.'

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Schedule of Services

This schedule is correct at this time but may be subject to future alterations – please check on our website for the most up-to-date information.

All services start at 10am, with the exception of Café Church, which starts at 4pm.

Please could you continue to book to attend services by contacting the Benefice Office on 01962 880 845 or office@downsbenefice.org.uk

Please would you also continue to wear masks until we are advised otherwise.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ch</i>	<i>Cr</i>	<i>Li</i>	<i>Sp</i>	<i>Wh</i>
<i>22nd August</i>	Holy Communion			Morning Prayer	
<i>29th August</i>			Harvest Festival Holy Communion		Morning Prayer
<i>5th Sept</i>	Harvest Festival		Café Church		Morning Prayer
<i>12th Sept</i>		Morning Prayer		Holy Communion	
<i>15th Sept (Wed)</i>			Holy Communion		
<i>19th Sept</i>	Holy Communion		Morning Prayer	Pet Service	
<i>26th Sept</i>		Harvest Service			Harvest Festival