

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
GRAFHAM**

'THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK'

24th March 2021

I wrote last week about St Cuthbert and our need, like him, sometimes to have a place of silence and solitude, our own Inner Farne.

Few of us, though, are called to a life of permanent solitude and so for most of us these times apart are times for refreshment so that we may re-engage more fully with our particular calling in the world. I can't trace the source of the following words called 'Thoughts from Holy Island', (an alternative name for Lindisfarne), but they seem to me to sum up this interplay of times alone with God and times working with him in the world.

Lord,
There are times when I need to be an island,
Set in an infinite sea
Cut off from all that comes to me
But surrounded still by thee.
Times of quiet and peace
When traffic and turmoil cease
When I can be still and worship thee
Lord of land and sea.
Full tide and ebb tide
Let life's rhythms flow
Ebb tide, full tide
How life's beat must go.

Lord,
I must be part of the mainland
A causeway between me and others
There are times when I can only find thee
In working with my brothers.
Times of business and industry
Freeing ourselves from captivity,
It's when we give a helping hand
We meet you, Lord of sea and land.
Ebb tide, full tide
Let life's rhythms flow
Full tide, ebb tide
How life's beat must go.

At the beginning of this week I attended, online, a Festival of Pilgrimage. One of the speakers, John Pritchard, a former Bishop of Oxford and a regular leader of pilgrimages, focused on what we might bring back from a pilgrimage. One of the things that he suggested was what he called

an 'enriched normality' . In other words that the time on pilgrimage can help us to become more aware of God in the midst of our everyday lives. He quoted C. S. Lewis' words, 'I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else.' I liked Bishop John's own interpretation of these words, that faith should not be a spectacle to look at but spectacles to look through.

There has been a lot in the media recently about how to re-engage after lockdown. Much of the advice is to take it slowly, not to rush, otherwise we will feel overwhelmed by activity and interaction with other people. Perhaps through lockdown we have been able to spend more time with God. As we look forward to a relaxation in the present restrictions, it may be time now to consider how the 'new normal' (whatever that means!) might be enriched by those experiences. It may be that we will want to continue with a prayer practice that we have discovered in this time or to build regular time for reflection into our lives, or possibly schedule in a longer period of 'time out' with God in the coming months. I hope that each of us will find the rhythm that the unknown writer speaks of for ourselves.

With love and prayers

Camilla

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