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Weekly Letter – 27 August 2023

Matthew 16.13-20

Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ

What we have this morning is a memorable piece of drama, which can encourage you (and I hope it does) to see that a tame faith is a million miles away from the adventure that we are all invited to. Peter's confession encourages us to take another step, and place our lives in God's hands – because with him the adventure begins by opening the door to infinity, and this adventure is one of the numerous reasons why believing that Jesus is Lord is so attractive.

It's good to remind ourselves of Peter's journey, for Peter is a mirror image of each of us. He cannot accept, and therefore understand why Jesus has to die, he does not want Jesus to go to Jerusalem; he cannot deal with Jesus washing the disciples' feet, and yes like us, he denies that he knows Jesus – which we do in so many subtle ways!

You might say, Peter is the patron saint of slow developers, or people who 'get it' and then loose the plot! His life encourages us all to 'keep the faith', and so he says, "Yes, you can do it!" Christ makes it crystal clear how "we can do it". For we all need to pray that God's Spirit will reveal the truth to us, and this surely is a daily prayer.

Through revelation Peter recognises the power of God working through Jesus' words, and this direct encounter with the living God in Jesus shakes Peter to the core of his being. Before Peter refers to Jesus as teacher, Rabbi or master, but now, he says Lord.

It's the same with all of us, for sometimes we sense in services, while we read Scripture, or while we ponder on God in silence, that God is real and alive. We momentarily realize Jesus is the holy one of God.

In catching a glimpse we also realise that we are unable to put all that we experience together, so we can continue to search for a way forward. For we are probing for a complete understanding, which like Peter 'comes and goes'. It's the same with Thomas – and for a moment like us, he can whole heartedly say, "My Lord and my God".

But for now with all our history, with the words we use and hear, we are in reality on a huge journey, for these words, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God", are so vast, rarely can we even begin to grasp their meaning and perhaps they will always surpass us?

As Jesus knows, flesh and blood can only give you a glimpse of who He is, so we are called, like Peter to pray that God's truth will be revealed to us, for truth is a true gift of God. Let us all pray for God's spirit to continue to reveal his truths to us.

Stephen

Sunday Morning Worship in Christ Well, and on Zoom at 10.30 am will be led by Rev Frieder Kreschnak
Bible Readings: Isaiah 43.1-3: Mark 5.26-34

Cycle of Prayer in the Swansea Region – we will pray for Hall Street, Llanelli

Prayers for every household – we will pray for Manor Road nos. 73-135

Tea/Coffee Rota – Ros and Wynford

Induction Service – Christ Well - Saturday, 2nd September at 2 pm

We are looking forward to the Induction Service when we hope to welcome many old, and new, friends to share this special occasion with us.

Welcome to the Walkings

We have been looking forward for many months to the time when Simon would become Minister for the Swansea Region, and Christ Well. At last the waiting is over, as Simon and Sue have now moved in to the Manse – so we say “welcome to Swansea”.

For Leaders

(Lectionary readings: Exodus 1.8-2.10: Psalm 124: Isaiah 51.1-6: and Psalm 138: Romans 12.1-8: Matthew 16.13-20)

Gracious God, we pray for people in positions of leadership.

Give them wisdom and integrity, a concern for all people, not just their supporters, and a desire to unite, not to divide.

To those who are reluctant leaders, give confidence,
to those who seek power, give a proper sense of humility,
to those who find leadership a burden, give strength.

We pray too for all the people who make leadership possible.

We give thanks for the example of the Hebrew midwives, the mother and sister of Moses, and the daughter of Pharaoh, whose love and quick thinking allowed Moses to survive to become the leader of God’s people.

We pray that we, too, may be ready to answer your call, in whatever way we can.

Sue McCoan (URC Prayer Handbook 2023)