

Feast of St Luke the Evangelist

My dear Friends,

One of the many things that I have missed during our period of lockdown and subsequent restrictions on our activities is our regular monthly healing Eucharists. I know these take place in Churches all around our diocese and are much valued by those who attend and by those who cannot be present but know that they are being prayed for and remembered. Two of the particular aspects of these services are the laying on of hands and the anointing with Holy oil, both practices firmly based in Biblical and Church tradition. Of course they are not now easily performed owing to the rules that we operate under at the moment.

Praying for the sick and showing practical support for those in need is an ancient and essential part of the Christian life. This Sunday is a red letter saints day as we remember St Luke, famous not only as the author of his Gospel and the Book of Acts but also as a physician. The medicine practised in the first century would have been very different from that we benefit from today but the vital need for caring and curing the sick was present in the Gospels from the start. In our reading from St Luke this Sunday, we learn from Chapter 10 of how Jesus sent his followers out to proclaim his good news. He told them to dress simply and travel light and accept whatever hospitality was offered. Our Lord said to them, "Cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

The miraculous healings that Jesus made were mirrored then by some of his disciples and into the early days of the infant church. However as time went on they were not so prevalent. Nevertheless the Church did take Jesus command seriously and many of our early saints and church leaders established communities, abbeys and convents which devoted their time not only to education and spreading the Christian faith but also pioneering what we now know as our hospitals.

Today we are in need of healing and wholeness more than ever not only here in Wales but throughout the world. We are grateful for the wonderful work of doctors and nurses and all who work tirelessly in our health care services. We are also conscious of those who pray and care for the healing of our souls, our hearts and minds. Some are trained medically to bring us back to good health, others have a spiritual discipline which can help us find inward peace and tranquillity. It is not always possible to gain physical restoration. Searching for inward health and waiting upon God's will for us in whatever comes is part of the journey of Faith that we all share on this earth until we come to that Kingdom of God that Luke wrote of in his Gospel. May the peace and wholeness that Christ shares with us be known to you and all for whom you pray.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk,
Vicar of Roath and Area Dean of Cardiff.