

The Third Sunday of Lent

My dear Friends,

Our season of Lent continues, we approach the midway point of the 40 weekdays. The English name Lent is different from the Latin term 'quadragesima' meaning 40 days, which in turn gives us the Italian, Spanish and French words which all mention the number of days. The word Lent comes from the old English word meaning lengthen referring to the increasing daylight we enjoy in Spring. It is certainly good to see signs of the changing seasons. The snowdrops have passed, the daffodils are in full array and the hyacinths and bluebells in the Vicarage garden are making tentative appearances.

Another joyful sign of spring are the nesting birds in our trees and hedges. They are constantly working to establish their woody homes and striving to feed their hungry young in all weathers and conditions. They constantly adapt to the changing conditions and yet sing giving us a reminder of the beauty of creation and God's faithfulness. I wonder whether we would be so sanguine if we had annually to rebuild our homes and scavenge to put food on the table! Times are tough for many people at the moment but many of us still are blessed with the security of home and the knowledge that we have our daily needs met.

Our Churches are also still there for our worship and the delivery of the Sacraments. People may still come for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, even if the way we offer them are different from former occasions. There have had to be changes in all parts of our lives over the last year and inevitably we have been unsettled and sometimes distressed by them. We are reminded in our Gospel this week (John Ch 2, v13-22) that Jesus saw the need for change and challenge as he visited the temple in Jerusalem. There he found the money changers and the traders abusing their positions and making God's house a marketplace. They had become more concerned with providing people with the right cash and creatures that were acceptable for temple sacrifices than the true meaning and worth of their faith.

Jesus even went as far as saying he would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. Those listening took him literally and could not understand how such a task could be performed as the temple had taken forty six years to build. He was speaking figuratively and referring to his future death and resurrection. He was to be seen as the new construction, it was the temple of his body. This was only apparent to the disciples after he had risen from the dead. Although we may find it hard to cope and understand the circumstances in which we are living and the uncertainties that may befall us, let us be reassured that if we continue to place our trust in God and his teachings we will come through with greater strength and hope for the future.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk,
Vicar of Roath.