

Reflection by Rev. Sarah

About ten weeks ago, I received a letter from Bishop Robert's office inviting me to write an account of my time as a deacon and a paragraph on what will change when I am priested.

The first section was reasonably straightforward. I have been warmly welcomed by the good people of St Thomas, and you have been supportive of my achievements and forgiving of my mistakes. I've learned that people have a surprising amount of confidence that you know what you are doing, and that here is a tremendous amount of support available.

So, what will change when I am priested? My initial answer was brief: 'I have no idea'...which left me about 196 words short. Being ordained is described as an ontological change – a change to *who you are* rather than simply what you do, so its impact is difficult to predict.

I also wanted to identify that I have been a priest since the age of 14. This was when I prayed and offered myself to God. As the words left my mouth, I knew that I had come home through the door which led to life. I know that for many people, the journey is more winding, but perhaps you can identify a moment of clarity in your faith. From that moment, I was a member of the royal priesthood, able to approach the throne of God with confidence. Forty years later, I am set to enter another definition of priesthood.

Finally, I wrote to Bishop Robert quoting the words of the Ordination Service, which include that priests are called to lead God's people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel; using the example of the Good Shepherd, to sustain the community with Word and Sacrament. I'm still not sure how life will change once I am priested, but I know that being here at St Thomas will help to form the priest I shall become, and for that I am extremely grateful.

Even if you cannot join the service by telephone or video on Sunday, it would be good to try to say our prayers in some form **at 10.30** that morning, and to be intentionally holding each other up to God, and praying for the wider community of St Thomas.

NEXT SUNDAY 05.07.20 St Thomas the Apostle

SERVICES Public worship suspended



READINGS

OT Habakkuk 2: 1-4

NT Ephesians 2: 19-end

GOSPEL John 20: 24-29

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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 28th June 2020

St Peter & St Paul

By the time you read and receive this, I hope St Thomas Church will be **open for private prayer**. This is a great step forward for us as a worshipping community and for all the people who live in St Thomas. This is especially a moment when we need some space to be with God in prayer and reflection. As I write this, it's also been announced (with no further details) that churches may resume worship from 4 July. I am delighted by this and we will have to see exactly what it means for us—what we continue to do on-line and what we do in the building.

Sunday worship by Zoom this week The telephone numbers are the same: 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196, bearing in mind that's it's worth trying a second one if the first isn't very good. **The meeting number is 846 4638 6622 and the access code/password 425499.** Watch this space for details going forward.

Fun & Fundraising We will need some serious thought about this in the light of new developments

Fr David



Collect

Almighty God, whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul glorified you in their death as in their life: grant that your Church, inspired by their teaching and example, and made one by your Spirit, may ever stand firm upon the one foundation, 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**

Zechariah 4:1-6a,10b-14

The angel who talked with me came again, and wakened me, as one is wakened from sleep. He said to me, 'What do you see?' And I said, 'I see a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it; there are seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And by it there are two olive trees, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.' I said to the angel who talked with me, 'What are these, my lord?' Then the angel who talked with me answered me, 'Do you not know what these are?' I said, 'No, my lord.' He said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts. For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel.

'These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth.' Then I said to him, 'What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?' And a second time I said to him, 'What are these two branches of the olive trees, which pour out the oil through the two golden pipes?' He said to me, 'Do you not know what these are?' I said, 'No, my lord.' Then he said, 'These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth.'

Acts 12:1-11

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to ar-

rest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him.

The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, 'Get up quickly.' And the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, 'Fasten your belt and put on your sandals.' He did so. Then he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.' Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. Then Peter came to himself and said, 'Now I am sure that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting.'

Matthew 16:13-19

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and what-

ever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

Post-Communion Prayer

Almighty God, who on the day of Pentecost sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame, filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel: by the power of the same Spirit strengthen us to witness to your truth and to draw everyone to the fire of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

Jim Foley shares this **vestry prayer** with us, which he remembers from his time at the Cathedral under Canon Mawson. It seems right for now, so thank you Jim:

Calm our restless hearts and minds
that we may rest in thee.
That we may worship thee
in spirit and in truth
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Time to Mourn. These are difficult times and you are invited to add a ribbon or piece of material to the Church railings as a token of your loss, whatever that may be. It's already showing the deep pain felt by so many people in St Thomas and we hope you will join us by making your own tribute to the difficult period we have all experienced.

Petertide is the traditional time for ordinations, so we pray for all those preparing to be ordained later in the year, especially for Sarah, to be ordained priest: *Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire / And lighten with celestial fire / Thou the anointing Spirit art / Who dost they sevenfold gifts impart.*