

28th February 2021

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In our Gospel reading Jesus explains that he will be rejected, murdered then resurrected. Peter, thinking that Jesus has lost the plot, draws him aside. Then does his best to explain that no self-respecting Christ gets murdered. Jesus has clearly forgotten what the 'Christ' is.

Peter knows that Israel's prophets have promised that God will raise up a new leader – the Christ. This leader will re-establish God's reign. They who will lead the people of Israel out of slavery (again).

Peter's experience of people limits his understanding of God. In his mind victory must mean a reversal of fortune. The oppressed (Jews) will switch places with their oppressors (Romans). He is picturing a political, or even military coup. Never mind that coups don't end oppression. They just change the uniform of the oppressors.

Jesus identifies Peter's well-meant advice as a satanic attack on his identity.

In Mark's gospel Jesus describes himself as the 'Son of Man' rather than Christ. 'Son of Man' is like a hyperlink back to the book of Daniel (7:13 where Daniel relates a rather confusing vision. In it 'one like a son of man' has victory over a range of 'beasts'. Then this son of man receives 'authority, honour and sovereignty' to rule 'all nations.'

Jesus knows something that Peter doesn't. Jesus knows that the real enemy is not the Roman soldiers. The real enemy is the powers of evil that drive people to treat one another with contempt and cruelty.

Jesus has come to set the Jewish people free. But he has also come to set the Romans free. To free both from their enslavement to sin. Both victim and perpetrator need freedom. Jesus knows that no amount of force will do it. Bondage to evil can only be broken by love. Love that provides justice. Love that seeks the good of the other. Love that does not give up. Love that will cost Jesus his life.

No wonder Jesus tells Peter 'Get behind me, Satan. You are not setting your mind on God's interests, but on man's' (Mark 8:33).

When I feel hurt my first instinct is to lash out. I know that this leads to a spiral of destruction. But knowledge doesn't stop my emotions raging. It takes self-control to pause a moment and pray. To ask God to show me what is really going on. To offer a grace-filled response rather than an angry reaction. I often fail.

Paul reminds the Corinthian church that their battle is never with people. It is with the forces of evil within our own heart. To win we must recognise 'we do not wage war according to human standards... we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ'.

What difference might it make if *all* my thoughts were obedient to Christ? Or if I had the insight to tell the difference between those thoughts that obey Christ and the ones that are captive to the powers of evil?

Maybe it's time I did a little heart-battling of my own. Feel free to join me.

With every blessing,

Louise

NOTICES

Holy Trinity Blacon are the living church of our living God, and we continue to be at work here! If you are able, do check the parish website www.holytrinityblacon.org or our Facebook page (holylrinityblacon) for updates.

LOCKDOWN affects the whole country now, but fortunately we can still continue to meet (socially distanced) in church to worship together, and we will continue meeting at 9.30am each Sunday. The minibus is also running, so do let us know if you would like a lift.

PRAYING FOR BLACON This week, Louise and Tina are joined by Jo Pemberton who is on placement with us, and we are prayerfully putting out chocolates, as we take our exercise. Do join us in praying for the residents of the following roads: *Brisbane Road, Darwin Road, Chevron Hey and Chevron Close*.

EVENING PRAYER We meet each Wednesday 5pm for Evening Prayer on Zoom. Do let us know if you would like the link – everyone is welcome to join us.

LENT Each Sunday in Lent, after the 9.30am service, there is a time of silent contemplative prayer in church from 11am. There is also a Lent Course run online on Thursday evenings at 7.30pm 'Transformed by the presence of Jesus' – do let us know if you want the Zoom link.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS – The video is now on our website, do go to <https://holylrinityblacon.org/whats-on/events/stations-of-the-cross.php> If you do not have access to the internet, and would instead like a DVD of our stations video, please let Tina or Louise know.

SING FOR FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – Starting Monday March 1st at 6.30pm is a series of sessions to sing together and learn together about fruits of the Spirit. For a Zoom link and further information, please contact Tricia H

ELECTORAL ROLL – In preparation for our Annual Meeting on 11th April, we need to update our electoral roll. If you want to check your entry, please contact Sue K or Linda in the Parish Office. They will also be able to get a form to you if you need to add or amend an entry (forms are also available in church). Alterations to be completed by 1st April.

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