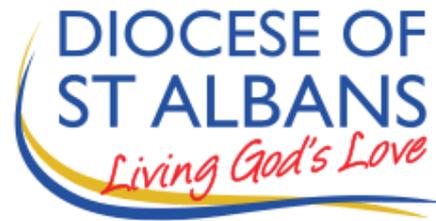


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Lent - Day 17 'a great banquet' Monday 20th March 2017

Luke 5 : 29 - 32

Then Levi gave a great banquet for him [Jesus] in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."

People can so easily be excluded from a group or community because someone or some people don't think they fit or are worthy to belong. As such they are kept apart from the 'in crowd'. Sometimes our church communities can unintentionally exclude people and therefore hinder them encountering Christ in and through the church. Levi acted positively by inviting a large crowd including those society looked down on and saw as being different and unwelcome.

[Follow this link for the Bible passage](#)

Reflection

- How can you and your church act so that every time you meet or worship or host an event it is like giving a great banquet for Jesus, to which a large crowd is invited?

Respond & Comment

- What will you start doing or commit afresh to do, as part of your church, to demonstrate generosity, hospitality and welcome to all?
- [Make a comment and share your thoughts with others](#)

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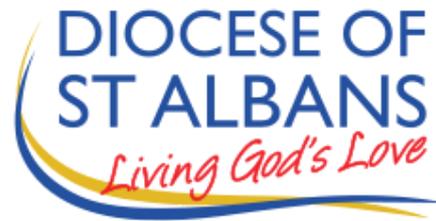
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Lent - Day 18 'love your enemies'
Tuesday 21st March 2017

Luke 6 : 27 - 31

But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

It has to be said that these are amongst the most challenging instructions Jesus gave to his followers. They are the opposite to what we naturally want to do. Humans, we, find it hard to love our enemies and behave positively in situations and relationships where animosity and ill-feeling are rife. But loving, doing good,

blessing, praying, offering and giving are characteristics of disciples of Jesus, even to those we feel are undeserving, or are the last people on earth we would like to do this for.

[Follow this link for the Bible passage](#)

Reflection

- Who have you fallen out with? Who do you know who doesn't think well of you?
- Pray God's blessing on them.

Respond & Comment

- Think of a way that you can love, do good, bless or give to someone with whom your relationship is not in a good place.
- [Make a comment and share your thoughts with others](#)

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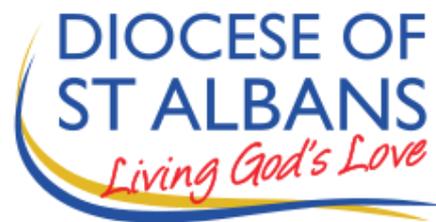
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Lent - Day 19 'good treasure of the heart'

Wednesday 22nd March 2017

Luke 6 : 43 - 45

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Jesus makes it clear that what we produce on the outside (words, behaviour, actions) comes from what's inside (the desires and values stored in our hearts). The good we produce from the good in our hearts and the bad we produce from the bad things we keep in our hearts.

[Follow this link for the Bible passage](#)

Reflection

- Sit quietly with God and let's pray together, 'Lord increase the good treasure of my heart and cleanse me of the evil treasure stored in my heart.'

Respond & Comment

- How will you demonstrate the good treasure you have in your heart today?
- What good will you show to someone?
- [Make a comment and share your thoughts with others](#)

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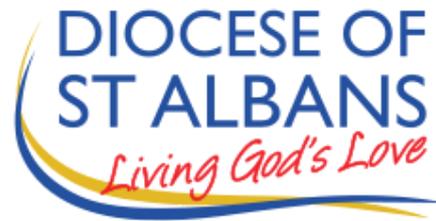
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Lent - Day 20 'sow his seed' Thursday 23rd March 2017

Luke 8 : 5 - 8

A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold.

We can think of this parable in two main ways. The first, and often applied idea, is the need to try our best to make sure we are like good soil ready to receive the seed of God's word that will grow within us. The second idea is less promoted and this speaks of God on a mission, who is like a sower sowing his seed generously and liberally everywhere - on the path, on the rock, amongst thorns and on good soil. all with hope that those who are receptive to this words of love and forgiveness, will hear them.

[Follow this link for the Bible passage](#)

Reflection

- God is like a sower who sows his seeds of loving forgiveness generously and liberally everywhere.
- Ask God to show you any values or ideas that hold you back from showing his love everywhere.

Respond & Comment

- What difference will God's approach to mission make to the way you live, starting today?
- [Make a comment and share your thoughts with others](#)

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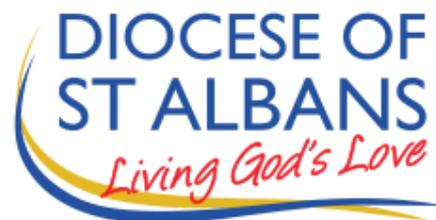
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Lent - Day 21 'who do you say I am?'
Friday 24th March 2017

Luke 9 : 18 - 20

Once when Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They answered, "John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God."

[Follow this link for the Bible passage](#)

Reflection

- If Jesus was to ask you the question, 'Who do you say I am?', what would you reply?

Respond & Comment

- Pray for an opportunity to describe Jesus to someone in the days ahead.
- [Make a comment and share your thoughts with others](#)

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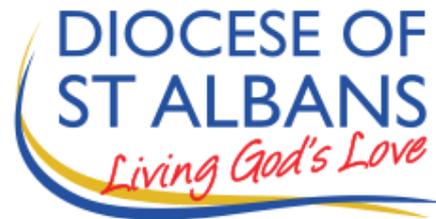
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Lent - Day 22 'peace to this house' Saturday 25th March 2017

Luke 10 : 3 - 6

"Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you."

'Whatever house you enter, first say 'peace to this house' (10:5). It can be quite difficult to be a person of faith in today's world, we can feel like sheep amongst wolves. Jesus instructs his disciples to bless each place we go into with a prayer of peace.

[Follow this link for the Bible passage](#)

Reflection

- How can you be a person of peace in every situation and place you enter?

- How can you choose your words and actions more carefully so that they have a peace-giving influence.

Respond & Comment

- In what places will you pray this prayer of blessing today?
- Why not simply pray, 'Peace to this house / place' as you enter each place you spend time in, whether that's a home, an office, a shop, a factory or station.
- [Make a comment and share your thoughts with others](#)

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