



Parish of Finchampstead and California

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 14 June 2020

Now the Vacancy has started ...

[As many of you know, I don't preach from a script or notes, so I can't offer you the exact text of my sermon. I hope the notes which follow are a helpful, and accurate, summary of what I said - John]

INTRODUCTION: Comments on the Gospel reading (Matthew 9:35-10:8)

- Jesus called his disciples as individuals. He called them by name. So he calls us.
- Those individuals became a group - the Twelve - who went with Jesus and were taught by him. He told them how they were to behave within the group: *Love one another* (John 13:34). So for us in our Christian community.
- But he also told them that they were to go out - to the lost sheep (10:6). They were to bring in the harvest (9:37). So we are to do the same now, when the harvest is no less plentiful.

TODAY IS IMPORTANT - BUT WHY?

- Because *last* Sunday was important, as Canon Julie's final Sunday as Rector.
- Today marks the start of a new era for the Parish - **Now the Vacancy has started.**
- But, in many ways (though we'll miss Julie a lot), few things have changed and the incumbent's responsibilities will be taken on temporarily by others.
- We start from a position of strength - because of the competence of those others already in place: six churchwardens; four clergy; and, in addition, such a wide spread of skills, capabilities and willingness throughout the Parish, all offered as a matter of course.
- So there is nothing to worry about.
- For those who remember the last Vacancy, things went really well - there's no reason for this time to be different.
- Remember that the Twelve fulfilled their potential only after Jesus' Ascension. From Pentecost on, they thrived and the church grew.
- We too have a loving Father, Jesus in our hearts, and the power of the Holy Spirit among us.

CONCLUSION

- As individuals we depend on our relationship with Jesus.
- As members of this group of Christians, this parish, we can do so much more together than apart (even in the middle of this pandemic), both in relation to one another and to the wider community.

- We can have confidence in the future and look forward to welcoming a new incumbent to a vibrant and active parish, rooted in the love and teaching of Jesus.
- God has been faithful to this parish for nearly 900 years and won't stop now. We can rely on that: *For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures for ever, and his faithfulness to all generations* (Psalm 100:5).

JRE / 12.6.20