



# Growing Faith

03 - Spring | 12 February 2021

## Thought for the week

### Life as a Pilgrimage

Written by Father Chris

Dear Friends in Christ,

**'I lift my eyes to the hills;  
O from where shall my help come?  
My help will come from the Lord,  
the maker of heaven and earth'**



As I write this message I will be preparing for my final Sunday as parish priest of Rishton, as I resign on the 14th February. Not only do I leave Rishton, but I too begin a new chapter in my journey with our Lord as I also leave the Church of England to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. Why? Well, Mr Pountain hasn't given me the word count to go into that, and it's not the reasons behind my resolution I want us to ponder, but rather, importantly, the image of our journey with Christ as his disciples today. I love the image of pilgrimage for that, a sacrificial journey to a sacred place for us, a journey, we pray, to our heavenly home; and my second thought, the challenging decisions that we sometimes have to make as we follow Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14.6).

The words with which I began are from Psalm 121, a section known as the Psalms of Pilgrimage. These were songs to accompany God's people as they journeyed, made pilgrimage, to Jerusalem, ultimately to the Temple. Travel today, when it's not a pandemic at least, is relatively safe and straightforward. If we decided to make a journey, anywhere in the world, it could be easily booked online and the travel present us with little real challenge. But imagine that journey thousands of years ago, indeed even a hundred years ago? It would have required careful planning, most likely cost a large sum to the average man or woman. It would have taken many more days, even weeks and months, than a flight or train journey today. When we look at our lives with Christ through the image of a pilgrimage let us remember that we are on a journey that requires utter and total determination and clear purpose. When Jesus was talking about the dedication required of his followers, he said this, 'No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God.' (Luke 9.62). As we begin the season of Lent, preparation for the great feast of Holy Week and Easter, let us

keep our eyes firmly fixed on our discipleship with Christ, the Pilgrim Journey, and the eternal home he promises for his faithful. Let us always remember that our help, always, 'comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth'.

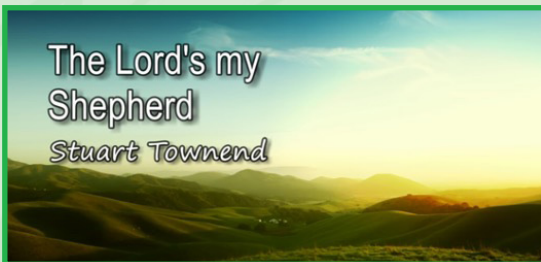
Secondly, challenges along the way. As we journey with Christ, it is inevitable that challenging decisions or difficult situations will arise. Indeed, Christ talks of it often in the Gospels. My decision to leave my parish and the Church of England to join brothers and sisters in the Roman Catholic Church has been an enormously challenging one to make, as much as I know it is of God's will. When challenges of one kind or another, little or large, come in our path first look to Jesus, his example in the scriptures, and commend it ALL to him in prayer. Secondly, and I found this such a blessing these past months, go to close Christian friends who can pray with you, for you, share with you and help you discern. And remember, as reflected and affirmed in the other verses of psalm 121, 'The Lord himself is your guardian' who 'will guard you from all evil' and 'guard your going out and coming in, from now and for evermore'. I'm beginning to learn, and it's taken me some years (!), that to face these challenges with prayerful confidence, striving for conviction of truth, we do not get weakened by the struggles. No, far from it, we are strengthened and become more of the image of Divine Love, the true reflection (1 Corinthians 13.12), we are called to be.

It's been a rich blessing indeed, my friends, to have shared in your wonderful, faith filled school community as part of my journey. Thank you so much for that. Please pray for me now as I begin a new chapter in my pilgrimage, as I for you.

Every blessing, Fr Chris

## Our School Song

Why not sing along with this as we worship together.



## Teenager's Tip

### God is in Your Heart

By Sophia Bailey, Year 7.

I know times have been tough people, with the situation we are in. It can be really annoying, but we shouldn't forget about God and Jesus. We can always think about them if we are doing something.



Here's a tip to help you remember God and Jesus are always with you: Try doing something that you might not want to do, like helping other people, and watch as you find the courage within you to do it. This comes from God.

Always remember that God is in your heart.

## Song for the Reflection



## Prayer for the Week

By Mr Craig Scales (Trainee RE Teacher)

Dear Lord,

Through your omnibenevolence You came down to Earth and became incarnate in order to save everyone. Saviour Jesus Christ I ask You to save me by Your grace!

You taught us that "Whoever believes in Me shall live and never die." If then, faith in You saves the lost, then save me for I believe so strongly that you are the light of the world.

I ask you Jesus to forgive me for all of my sins. I ask You to come into my life. I am a sinner. I have been trusting myself and my own good works, but now I put my trust in You. I accept You as my own personal Saviour. I believe You died for me. I receive You as Lord and Master over my life. Help me to turn from my sins and to follow You. I accept Your forgiveness and Your gift of eternal life. I thank You for it.

I promise that I will work to do Your will, my Lord and God, Jesus Christ, all the days of my life and forever more.

In Jesus' precious name,  
Amen.



**"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?"**

**To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God."**

Micah 6:8

## Church Support

Great Harwood Christian Fellowship has a morning service at 10.30am and sermons can be listened to on their [website](#).

St John's and St Augustine's are currently livestreaming a service from one of our churches most Sundays on our Facebook pages - either [here for St John's](#) or [here for St Augustine's](#). A recording of the service is available later on our [YouTube page](#). You can also start an online course with us, which is for those who have got questions about life and the Christian faith and are looking for answers. On a Tuesday afternoon beginning shortly. The six sessions are \*Life – \*God – \*Mess – \*Jesus (2 weeks) – \*Onwards. Each lasts about an hour and involves DVD clips, fun exercises, group discussion and time for reflection. Please contact Hugh Scriven by [email](#) for more details.

A warm welcome awaits you to join us at Rishton, St Peter and St Paul's, Rishton to join us for our Sunday and midweek Eucharists. Sunday 10am, Monday and Wednesday 7pm and Thursday 10am. Church open daily for prayer 9am to 3pm. Follow us on Facebook for more info.

VISION: Live youth events every Friday night for 11-18s at 7:30pm on Zoom. The perfect end to the week with friends, fun, and chance to chat about God, life and faith. Find out more at [here](#).


Virtual church services at St. John's Baxenden (via zoom - please contact Tom for assistance 07974457544). 10am morning worship and 9am Little zoomers (family service).





Pastor Graham Kissack. Peel Street Baptist Church. Our services and Bible Studies can be found [here](#).

Church services at All Saints Clayton, are now being held on [Facebook](#). With a Children's service at 10:45, Prayers and Litany at 11:00am and Night Prayer at 9:30pm.

Want to explore the idea of faith in a safe, non-judgemental environment? Want a space to ask the difficult questions? Join Alpha online with St James' Church Clitheroe, Thursdays, 8pm via Zoom. Sign up [here](#).



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