



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Sunday 5th July 2020

Trinity IV 8.30 am and 11 am

St Matthew 11.16 – 19 & 25 – 30

Words cannot express how wonderful it is to have you back in this building worshipping almighty God.

I know that many of you have experienced the effects of Covid-19 virus in many different ways: through illness, the death of loved ones and friends, through hardships and privations and in many other ways. You have all, daily, been in the prayers of Fr Jack, Mthr Katy and me – and we continue to hold you in our prayers.

Things are not back to normal and I crave your patience as together we explore just how we can worship together in this place safely through the coming weeks and months.

Swimming Pools used to display signs which read: *No petting, spitting, shouting or dive bombing!* Well, in addition to those things, to keep us safe, we now have to add: no standing or kneeling, no processions or moving about the building during worship, no choir, no singing, no speaking loudly and I am afraid, the list runs on.

We are embarking on a new journey together, but that journey will lead us to the same destination, the heavenly banquet in

the New Jerusalem where we will sit and dine in the perfect love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; a place where God will be all in all and there will no social distance only the one, everlasting, perfect embrace.

Welcome back!

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It is a wonder, I think, that Christianity ever got going at all.

First, God the Father waits until a very particular time in a very particular place to reveal himself to a young unmarried teenager living in a remote and obscure byway-community in a forgotten bit of the Roman Empire.

Then, God continues to wait for thirty years, as Mary's child lives an anonymous life as the son a builder-carpenter, before hitching-up with what can only be described as a real ragtag group of far-from-loyal fishermen and rather shady, utterly unpromising tax collectors.

And then, to cap it all, as St Matthew tells us in today's Gospel reading, the Lord God of heaven and earth hides the good news of the Kingdom from the wise and the learned – those who presumably could do something with it - and reveals it instead to little children.

Hardly a recipe for success!

Yet God's way, thank God, is not our way. The way of the Kingdom is not the way of the world.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds his small band of followers that *God's* way is to hide himself from those whom he calls, ironically, the "wise and learned"; God's way is to reveal himself to the humble, the weak, the marginalised, to those who have no position or authority or influence.

It seems that God does not want to be identified with the Law, or with the cult of the Temple. That God's way is anything *but* the way of power, or ritual purity, or the way of judgment and punishment. That God does not want to be identified or limited by great encyclicals or the pronouncements of synods and councils or Acts of governmental legislation *but rather* with those who, in the eyes of the rich and the powerful, simply do not count at all – those who live, who just about cling on to life, on the very margins of society.

For some reason, these are the ones God chooses, the ones to whom he reveals himself. Why, because they alone seem to be the only ones who can see and hear God clearly – the only ones who can see God at work or hear with any clarity what he says.

It is on the shoulders of the humble, the weak, the marginalised, those who have no position or authority or influence, that God offers to lay his gentle burden-free yoke.

It is the humble, the weak, the marginalised, those who have no position or authority or influence who have borne the fierce heat of the day without thanks or reward and who will now be able to take their rest, to sit down and eat at the Heavenly Banquet. Amen.