



St Marylebone  
*Parish Church*

## Trinity Sunday Evening Prayer with Healing and Choir 2020

### Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8

This evening's reading will send a thrill down the spines of all those who have identified a need and sensed a call from God. 'Here I am, send me!' A desire to serve God in the world, to use one's gifts or energy and to find a way of focusing these is the best way to live one's life. A person who is obedient to a sense of God's call is the one you want to be your nurse, your police officer, your teacher, your priest, your therapist, your hospital porter, your Prime Minister, your neighbour. Because that person will be motivated by holy desire rather than human vanity. These words 'Here I am, send me!' were written in the context of bereavement and national instability. King Uzziah had been a hugely successful king for 52 years, even though his pride eventually got the better of him. But it was a very worrying time for Israel when he died of leprosy – Israel was threatened by hostile surrounding forces and felt lost without a strong leader.

In this context, Isaiah receives a mysterious, disturbing, thrilling vision of God. The Lord is seated upon a throne, worshipped by angels. Holy, holy, holy – the intensity of God's awesomeness is underlined by repetition, and provides a hint to us of the three persons in one God, we understand as the Holy Trinity. Like other biblical figures before and after him, Isaiah's experience of encountering God face to face made him acutely aware of his own shortcomings. 'I am a man of unclean lips'. Humility and a realistic appraisal of oneself is a key prerequisite to responding to God's call. But the Lord has a purpose; he chooses to use human beings as his instruments, and human beings must choose to be used. God asks for volunteers, he doesn't programme robots.

Isaiah has been chosen by God to be a prophet, to speak out to the world the things of God. And so his lips, his instruments of speech are cleansed by the angel with a live coal. Touched by the holy fire. Healed and forgiven his sin, Isaiah responds to God's invitation with joy and desire. 'Here I am, send me'. Love, fear,

gratitude, desire propel Isaiah to do God's work. It was a hard task, but ultimately Isaiah's ministry moved God's people to live lives of holiness.

And Isaiah, perhaps more than any of the prophets, foretold the coming of the Messiah, the suffering servant, sent by the Father in the power of the Spirit.

Dear friends, these past few months we have been constricted and constrained. Our horizons have narrowed, our desires confined. Let us ask the Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to give us a fresh vision of himself, and a renewed desire to respond to his call 'Who will go for us?' Two of the saints of God who particularly understood this were St Ignatius and St Teresa of Avila. They both talked about fostering holy desire, holy day dreaming as a form of worship and prayer. Not particularly using words, but just allowing the desire to do great things for the Lord to grow. The fact that the things one hopes and dreams for, the things one *would* do for God, may never actually happen is irrelevant. What is important is that you gladden the heart of God by showing him how immense your desires are even though your strength is very small.

There is value in this in enlarging our vision and our joy.

If we live within the confines of a small box, that will be our limitation.

So do some holy dreaming. Dream and experience the desire you have for yourself, for others, for the church, for our nation and our world. Dream and desire the healing that is needed. Take a few moments to do this before we come to our prayers.