

The Parish of Halas

Together in Christ

CRADLEY HALESOWEN HASBURY LAPAL ROMSLEY



Dear friends in Halas,

I remember an old French pastor, struggling with agonizing arthritis. He forced himself to walk daily, a long walk of two or so hours. Seeing how painfully hard it was for him to get going, I asked him: "Why force yourself to do something so difficult?"

"If I don't perseverer through the pain of getting going on my walk, it gets far worse without the exercise and I risk ceasing up completely."

This is perhaps a metaphor of prayer in some seasons of our lives. There are times when to pray costs a lot of energy. Those times when to find time, to go to the place, to try hard to focus, listen, list seems like wasted effort. But without those times we risk ceasing up completely. It takes faith to hold onto the truth that The Truth, Jesus, will never leave us or forsake us. It takes trust at such times to believe with Isaiah that a bruised reed God will not break and a smoldering wick God will not snuff out. (Isa 42:3)

The archbishops of Canterbury and York have invited us again to Thy Kingdom Come, to set aside time to pray, beginning at the Ascension and ending at Pentecost. It is a time when we are invited to pray for a renewal of faith, hope and love in our lives and in our church. It is also a time when we are invited to pray for five people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. We invite you as vicars of Halas to join in this worldwide wave of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost.

It strikes me that this might also be a good time to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we have time to listen and learn of God in the jubilee enforced on us by Covid 19. How can we as a church be obedient to our calling to be the hands, feet, face, voice of God in our communities? What are the habits of life and faith that will help our witness? What are those habits of our community life and faith which are now time to lay aside in order to be the face of Christ in a changed and changing world? I suspect there are some courageous decisions we could make about how we do things, how we spend our money, how we use our buildings. Thy Kingdom Come ten days of prayer may be a good opportunity for us, the Church, to be listening and learning.

These ten days of prayer may also be an opportunity for us to join in all sorts of styles of prayer around the whole world on the internet. Doing something we're not used to, in a style that may not be our own, may be refreshing and enlivening.

These ten days might also be spent making time for very personal journeys of faith as we welcome the transforming work of the Holy Spirit ever deeper in our spirits and psyches; somehow breathing in God's presence and strengthening, to know God's love in the recesses of our memories and experiences.

Do download the Thy Kingdom Come Prayer App or the Prayer booklet from the website. Follow the Facebook Thy Kingdom Come page and receive daily prompts. Paper copies of the booklet should come through the post soon too. Simply make some time each day to pray for God's Kingdom to come in your own life, in the lives of others, in your church and in your community.

None of these may be easy journeys into the life of prayer. The same French pastor gave me this response when I asked him why we bother to pray, "Jesus is the friend of all solutions!" (Jésus est l'ami de toutes les solutions.) I've never forgotten these wise words.

With our love,

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