



there must be
more to **life...**



Discover
Jesus.

Greetings,

As we enter the depths of Winter, we tend to hunker down and reduce a lot of activities due to the weather! Activities which we might do outside, etc., take a lower priority. The theme for July is *Jesus provokes questions* – the miracles and encounters with Jesus cause those around to question “who” he is? The “who is Jesus?” question has challenged and puzzled many people down the ages. C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* writes:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. (Lewis, 1952, p. 55)

Colloquially “either mad, bad or God” One of the motifs of the Gospel of Mark is that of conflict over who Jesus is and by what authority he carries out his works.

One help to understand Jesus is to understand him in his day and context, i.e. the culture of Palestine, coupled with how his audience would have perceived him. With this we face a challenge similar to that of understanding the Parables of Jesus (as per last month). One of this month’s attachments provides a series of links to the July Sunday lections, especially for the Gospels. The writer seeks to get behind the context in terms of Jesus’ culture. There are also a couple of links to some authors who work in the area of Biblical sociology and anthropology, and their works.

After the presentation we had at the Diocesan Synod by the Rev. John Warner it is helpful to have a look at ways we can introduce people to Jesus, and assist the development of faith. We were introduced to ***the Word one to one*** as a simple introduction to the Gospel of John. Fuller presentations/introductions are courses like *Alpha*, *Credo*, *Christianity Explained*, etc. There are additional materials online which might be of assistance to some? ***Pilgrim*** is a Church of England course worth looking at.

The following comes from their website www.pilgrimcourse.org/the-course

Pilgrim's approach

It starts at the very beginning

Pilgrim assumes very little understanding or knowledge of the Christian faith.

It focuses on Jesus Christ

Pilgrim aims to equip people to follow Jesus Christ as disciples in the whole of their lives.

It flows from the Scriptures

The primary focus of each session is a group of people engaging with the Bible together.

It draws deeply from the Christian tradition

In the Early Church, the Christian faith was taught by the transmission of key texts which summed up the heart of the Christian message. *Pilgrim* restores this approach for the twenty-first century.

It honours the Anglican way and its many streams

Pilgrim has been developed as a specifically Anglican resource which aims to cater for every tradition in the Church of England.

There are YouTube presentations, as well as books (Garrett Publishing in Melbourne stock these.)

For any who may have participated in the Diocesan Formation weekends, and interested in a refresher in Church History, an online presentation of lectures from Yale University covering the period from AD 200 to 1650. "**A Journey through Western Christianity: from Persecuted Faith to Global Religion (200 - 1650)**" is available from Coursera www.coursera.org/ (signing up is free!) This is one of many portals providing free university open learning courses. Again, you do not have to pay, you can audit the material, but if you wish to pay a minimal fee, and participate in the tests etc., and receive a certificate at the conclusion, that is possible as well.

For July, Ruth Daws has kindly sent some activities "for the young and young at heart" for each of the Sundays in July. These are attached separately. Please let us know if you have used them?

In terms of liturgical festivals in July, we have St. Thomas 3rd July, St. Mary Magdalene 22nd July (occurring on a Sunday this year) and at the end of the month, St. James the Great 25th July. Supplemental liturgical material from the Common Worship Times and Seasons is also attached to this email. Sea Sunday is celebrated globally on 8th July to acknowledge the enduring and vital work of the Mission to Seafarers. More information can be found here www.missiontoseafarers.org/Pages/Category/sea-sunday Also, 15th July will be ac.care Sunday for the Diocese (material for this will come separately from the Diocese/ac.care).

To conclude; the Gospel for the first Sunday is the reading where the haemorrhaging woman touches Jesus' robes in the crowd with the belief that this will heal her after many years of suffering. Those who went on the pilgrimage to the Holy Land last year with Bishop John were fortunate to spend some time at Magdala on the Sea of Galilee. One of the chapels in the Magdala Centre is the *Encounter Chapel* which features a mural-sized painting (by Daniel Cariola) of the encounter between Jesus and the haemorrhaging woman, a powerful visual image to have behind the altar.



Best wishes for the month ahead,

DP

Fr David Patterson
(Chair of Diocesan Task Group)