

OT: Isaiah 66.10-14
NT: Galatians 6.7-16
Gp: Luke 10.1-11,16-20

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Words from Paul's letter to the Galatians. Words with a certain resonance for those of us who are hopefully coming to the end of a year long interregnum! This past 12 months or so have shown the strength of the Holy Spirit at work in this place and beyond in our city.

I don't think that any of us priests, or the wardens, or members of the support team here would say that we did it all by our own strength and abilities. God has had more than a hand in it. And we haven't just survived, we've thrived. Through all the services of Advent and Christmas time, through the intensity of Holy Week and Easter, through all the various civic services, some highly organised, some where we have had to extract order from chaos! There have been all the occasional services too and speaking personally, I have taken more funerals this year than in all my previous 16 years of ordained ministry.

All this service has been in the name of God and as a privilege to care for his people and share so many aspects of their lives. We've achieved this through the grace of God but also by supporting one another and with a much needed sense of humour when the occasion required it!

Paul says, "*at the proper time we will reap a harvest*", I think this year we have reaped such a harvest as we have gone on but the work won't stop with the advent of Fr Philip, though there will be plenty for him to do.

At our baptism each one of us received the light of Christ and so we are called to walk in that light and to bring it to others as we journey through this world. A former administrator where I worked had a poster above her desk which said, "*Everybody lights up a room. Some people when they enter and others when they leave.*"

Let us be with the former but let us also remember we bring light not by our own merits but by the power of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who brings us comfort, who ensures that no matter what we are called to undertake or endure, we will never be tested beyond our strength because in our weakness, we are filled with his strength.

Last Sunday, Fr Steven talked about the kingdom of God, how we struggle to try and define it, to pin it down to human comprehension, to place it within parameters that we can understand. He went on to talk about some of the hints that Jesus gave about the nature of God's kingdom. How it is founded on community. From the very nature of God himself, three persons in harmony within one God. How there is an element of feasting. From all the miracles of Jesus which concern food to the sustenance that Christ ordained within the Eucharist and Holy Communion. How healing and transformation are central. From all the miracles of healing and the glimpses that Jesus gave us of the perfect humanity we were created to be.

So this past year, by the strength of God, we have sought to bring his healing and comfort to those in need.

We have prayed and worked together as a community and we have shared in the Eucharist and other meals together to feed both soul and body. Thanks be to God for his many and great mercies which have enabled this and which we pray will continue in this place where God has been worshipped and his people served for more than 750 years.

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