

From the Chaplain...

In our Gospel reading this Sunday (Mark 6. 1-13), we hear about what happens when Jesus returns to his hometown of Nazareth, having elsewhere become something of a sensation as a teacher and healer. As many of us know from personal experience, if familiarity doesn't necessarily breed contempt, it often breeds complacency, and Jesus's own community proves unable to appreciate who he is and what he is doing. Among much else, what is striking about this passage is the idea that Jesus's own effectiveness should somehow be dependent upon the response of his people: as we are told, 'he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief' (v.5). This seems not so much to indicate a weakness or limitation in Christ but rather a judgment upon the community; God chooses here not to override their lack of belief but instead to highlight its effects. Thus, even when faced with the Word made flesh, the people are still given the choice of whether or not to take heed. Their rejection, therefore, is the rejection not just of a local boy who has got too big for his boots but of the Incarnation itself. God is shouting His Word in capital letters right into the ear of these people, and still they are busy worrying about where Jesus went to school or who is likely to marry his sister. And so he does what anyone else would do: he moves on. Salvation history, it seems, will take place elsewhere.

This past Wednesday, a great congregation gathered in Southwark Cathedral for the consecration of the Venerable Alastair Cutting as the next Bishop of Woolwich. It was a joyful service, with many clergy and other supporters from the Woolwich Episcopal Area in attendance. We look forward to welcoming Bishop Alastair back to the Chapel in due course. Meanwhile, please also keep in your prayers the newly-appointed Archdeacon of Lewisham and Greenwich, the Revd Canon Dr Chigor Chike, who will take up his post in the autumn.

Later on Wednesday, the Charlton Deanery Synod met at the Church of St Michael and All Angels in Blackheath. The Archdeacon of Southwark, the Venerable Jonathan Sedgewick, gave a presentation introducing the document, 'Southwark Vision 2024-35: Christ Centred/Outward Focused'. Please find the document attached to this mailing for your reference.

Lastly, please also find attached to this mailing a music list for Sunday services during the summer term. We are fortunate to have a variety of choirs, consorts, and soloists scheduled to sing on Sundays until the Chapel Choir resumes its residence in mid-September.

Yours faithfully,
Robert

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