

From the Chaplain...

The idea of a worthy and responsible leader being like a shepherd to God's people appears again and again throughout the Old Testament. Jesus is obviously aware of this when, in the Gospel of John, he refers to himself as the 'good shepherd'. Not least, the good shepherd is prepared to risk his own life for the preservation and well-being of the flock (10. 11-14). So, too, in our Gospel reading for this Sunday (Mark 6. 30-34, 53-end), we are told that Jesus has compassion on the great crowd following him, 'because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things' (v. 34). This sentence is significant for a couple of reasons. First, it is important to remember that when Jesus encounters the crowd, he has been in the process of trying to get away for a bit of peace and quiet with his disciples. Yet the need that the people display – their terrible need for attention, for guidance, for reassurance – moves Jesus to set aside his own desires and to shepherd them once more into the ways of hope. It is also important to notice that by meeting these needs and by responding to these people, Jesus sets aside the time and attention he had planned to give to his own disciples. This is a detail that we ought not to overlook. For here Jesus is modelling for the disciples what real leadership often demands: it means a kind of selflessness and commitment to those who are vulnerable that holds nothing back, and not always through bold gestures, but often through small, daily sacrifices of personal time and convenience.

This Sunday, we are fortunate to welcome back to the Chapel the Rt Revd Michael Doe as our guest preacher. Chorister Byron Davis-Hughes will serve as cantor, and the whole congregation will be encouraged to join Byron in singing the *Gloria in excelsis* by Merbecke. After the service, Director of Music Ralph Allwood will again lead a short congregational singing practice (10-15 minutes) to help us gain confidence in singing the Communion service.

Yours faithfully,
Robert

chaplain@ornc.org

T: 020 8269 4796

M: 07814 704704