

E-ffervescence!



I trust that many of you luxuriated in the balmy summer conditions we have experienced fleetingly. Being the grinch I am- I did not! I am no hot house flower and find myself simply hot, uncomfortable, and exhausted during Summer.

Venturing out in the middle of the day requires forward planning of gargantuan proportions, and involves a full scale armory of sunblock, voluminous clothing if possible, a large hat and sunglasses. Unfortunately, the teenage naivety which led me to believe that I could become a sunkissed beach babe has resulted in consequences which I have no desire to exacerbate!

However- I realise that I am in the minority and do not begrudge those of you who flourish in heat this season of sun, sand and surf. It is frustrating when summer frolics and outdoor eating is on the agenda and a dish of hail arrives as an unplanned and unwanted aperitif!

And... I'm not a total summer hater. I do appreciate the lovely cool calm mornings and the opportunity to enjoy longer evenings, cut down on my hot coffee consumption and up my attention to a cold sauvignon blanc instead!

Enough about me... I hope you are enjoying the opportunities that summer brings you and those you spend time with. No doubt there is more to come... once this momentary glitch passes.

Let's hope it has by the time our Parish Picnic on Marsland Hill, Sunday 31 January at 12 noon rolls around. Our ten o'clock service prior to this celebration embraces Candlemas and provides blessings for almost everything- and definitely every one- for the year ahead!

Nets and Knots

An Excerpt from Sunday's Sermon

Sunday's gospel is an extraordinary story about an ordinary event- fishing. We naturally connect what we are hearing with our own experiences of fishing. So it would be easy for someone like me to hear Jesus inviting the first disciples (and by inference us) to fish for people and assume it is a one-on-one affair, like my own experiences of fishing, A single person with a single rod with a single hook on the end of a single line attempting to catch a single fish. taking it from its familiar environment into what I consider a better one.

But fishing in Jesus' time and in the context described in the gospel was radically different than my experiences of this one-on- one type fishing.

Jesus' disciples fished with a net. They would have cast the net into the water, and dredged or dragged the sea as they hauled the net back into the boat. Whatever happened to be swimming in the way of the net as it was lugged back on board would have been caught. The key to successful fishing wasn't so



much in the technical details of tides and weather patterns, but in the strength of the nets. For this reason, Jesus' fishing disciples spent most of their working day, not out on the lake's surface, but on shore, mending their nets. If their nets were strong and tight, anything caught in them couldn't escape.

This image has important implications, I believe, for church in our place and time. Instead of adopting a stance that requires us to scout around for an individual to 'hook in' and bring to Church, it releases us all to see 'fishing for people' as a more relational exercise.



If those disciples spent so much time on their nets to ensure a catch, what might those nets be for us today? Could it be that our nets are the web of relationships, friendships, and acquaintances that we all already have? Then we would spend our time focusing on finding new and creative ways to build on those relationships, ensuring that we treat ourselves and others the way God yearns to treat us.

And what about those knots in our nets? Could it be that they represent our relationship with God and our attitude to being God's stewards of Gods resources in this place?

If we ensure those knots are strong and tight, that we are using the resources we hold in trust wisely, that we take our own relationships with God seriously enough to be prepared to grow and risk and move out of our secure places of comfort, then you and I all the people we come in contact with will be caught up in a net knotted together with God's love, justice, peace, mercy and hope in a world which often chooses to ignore those precious things.

So much for the net- and the knots. What about the actual catch? Here things grow ever more hopeful. Because it's interesting that the word used for 'catching people' has overtones not so much for fishing, but of taking prisoners alive as opposed to killing them, so restoring to life someone under threat of death.

Therefore, according to our reading, Peter is not simply 'to fish for people', to somehow coerce them into being part of some sort of holy huddle, but to be God's agent in restoring people to life. Now, for me

anyway the image of fishing, is transformed to a net of hope as those we meet are caught in a real, living relationship with a real living God- and ourselves.

A Meditation of the Week:

...More netting and knotting

A fine thread of netting thread stretches between us

We reach out to hold it in our hand.

Each of us linked together with a task assigned,

Each of us bound by prayers past,

Prayers present,

To fulfil your call to work in this place.

Holy netting stretches out into the midst of community

Drawing us together,

Binding us in friendship,

Knotting us together in love.

Fine stands reaching back to the past,

Holy thread rolling back through many hands

Into the palm of the One who bears your name.

We feel the weight.

Your burden is light, your ways are easy to bear.

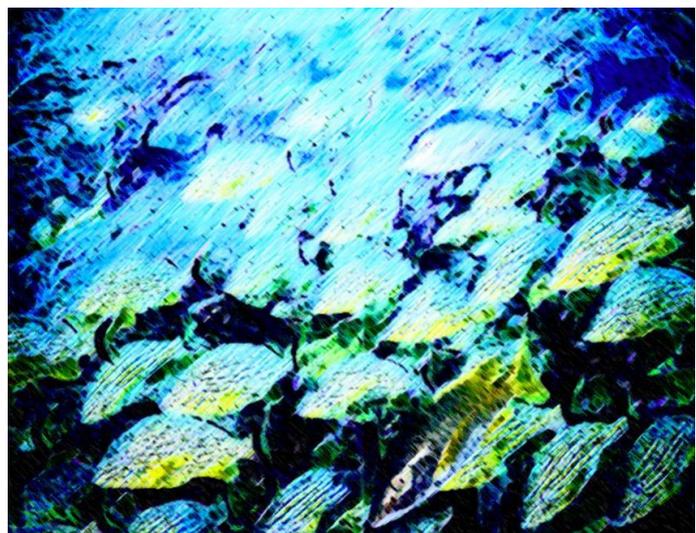
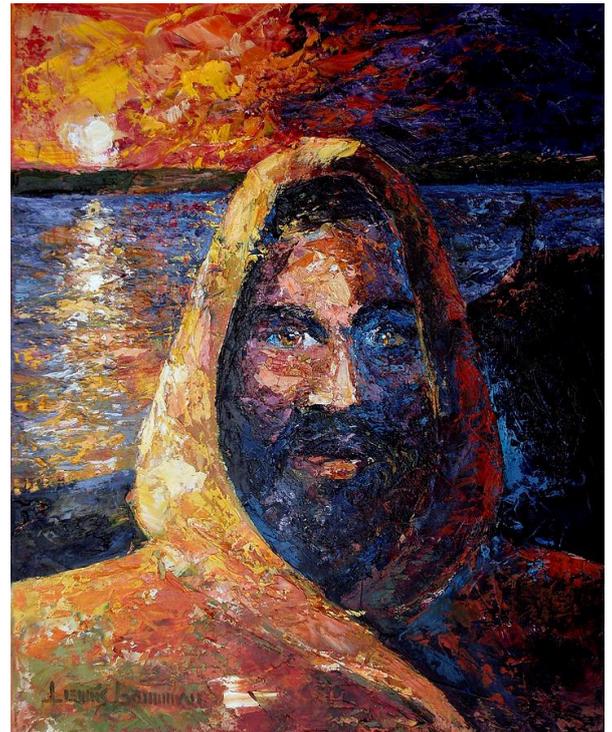
If we pull violently it might break

If we push too hard it might fracture.

We hold on carefully to your work

It is not ours.

It belongs to you, O God.



Stitch us with wisdom to meet the present needs.
Thread us with insight to fathom the one we serve.
Knot us with love to share in ever-widening circles.
Know us with loyalty
And weave your gentleness into all our work.
In the name of the one
Who will ensure our nets and knots work.
Amen

**Her name is Suzanne
(and she is the Archdeaconry (previously Regional) Administrator
who works from our downstairs library)**

My name is Suzanne Riddick, for the past 3 years I have been the Regional Administrator, based at St Luke's Church in Bell Block. This week I relocated to the Library/reading room at the Taranaki Cathedral. I am a member of the Brooklands co-operating church family. I have many interest one of them being spending time with my grandchildren. Two live in New Plymouth and I cherish every opportunity I can to spend time with them. I also enjoy reading and am an avid gardener, spending ever spare moment I have looking after all the wonderful plant I have. I also enjoy walking and dancing. If you see me please say hello as I look forward to meeting you.



Request for Accomodation

Mature single Christian woman from Hawaii requiring accommodation in Christian household from early-mid February. Open to possibilities of short term to longer term. I value health and wellbeing, faith and wise company. Please contact Kulia on 020 4193 9684. I'd prefer to be accessible to town and beach or Welbourn and not too far to the west of town.

Ash Wednesday Preparation

It is almost THAT time of year again- when we burn last year's Palm Sunday Crosses into ashes for our upcoming Ash Wednesday service. If you have some crosses lurking could you please bring them to the parish office by Monday 15 February.

Sunday Morning Readings

Jonah 3:1-10

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish." When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Psalm 62

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken.

How long will you assail a person, will you batter your victim, all of you, as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence?

Their only plan is to bring down a person of prominence. They take pleasure in falsehood; they bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. Selah

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Selah

Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath.

Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God,
and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work.

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.