

**I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid words from our Gospel reading from the Gospel according to St John. May I speak in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.**

'I do not give to you as the world gives'. Our Gospel readings today are all about God's generosity. Today we celebrate all the good gifts he gives to us. The gift of life in creation. The gift of new life in baptism. The gift of eternal life in our death and Resurrection. The gift of the Church to shape and form us. The gifts of the Sacraments to sustain us during our earthly lives. The gift of God's very self in Christ, and in this Eucharist, in bread and in wine.

Our Gospel reading points forward to the gift of the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the Church at Pentecost and in which we share through Confirmation. The gift of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, is the gift of peace. A reminder amidst all the troubles and anxieties of the world that when the gifts we have seem scarce or not enough, God has given us all we need. In times of trial, God comes to us again and again in Christ and reassures of his gifts to us, and call us to his peace. 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you'

Our second reading, from the Book of Revelation points us forward to the day when the gift of God's very self will be realised at the end of time. It paints a vision of when God will be all in all. There will be no more of the created patterns of time or season. 'The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

...there will be no more night; for the Lord God will be our light'.

Today, as we look forward to that gift, we celebrate all the good gifts which God gives us. All the good gifts which we are given so abundant and are called us to share as freely so that no one will go with out and that none of our siblings will feel that they do not share in the abundance of God's gifts towards them. God gives to us freely, and call us to do likewise. God does not give to us as the world gives.

God does not give to us in order to get something in return, or to make God's self feel better. God gives freely out of love. As Sarah reminded us last week, this generosity born out of love, is the pattern of life to which we as Christians are called.

In our first reading, from the Acts of the Apostles, we read of Lydia coming to be baptised. She is a wealthy woman. She deals in expensive cloth. She owns her own home and supports her own household. After baptism, she reflects God's generosity to those around her. She models the pattern of generosity and gift-giving to which we are all called.

She shares her resources with Paul and the other followers of Christ. She invites them to stay. She insists they share in the things which make up her life. 'She prevails upon them'.

After this Mass we have our APCM. We reflect on all the ways in which so many people in our church family are like Lydia. They give freely and generously of their time, money, energy, and talents. They model to each of us and to the world outside the

pattern of generosity and gift-giving to which we are called as Christians.

What gifts are we being called to share with each other morning?

What gifts are each of us being invited to receive?

As we share the gift of God's self to us in the bread of the Eucharist in a few minutes, we thank God for all those upon whose gifts our church family relies.

We pray that God's gift of himself to us in Christ and in this Sacrament might become more widely known throughout our community. That more might come to share with us in this gift, and that the love of God for all us might through the many gifts we all share become ever more widely known.