



GRAPEVINE

St Matthew's Rosslyn – Autumn 2021 Issue 96



Vicarage View

August 2021

The 17th verse of the 5th chapter of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew, “**I have not come to abolish the law or the prophets but come to complete them**”.

I remember nearly 50 years ago as an undergraduate being hauled over the coals by the Dean of Brasenose College, Oxford, a terrifying creature called Dr John Peach, for some trifling misdemeanour. I will confess no more; other than to say that I have always wondered why fire extinguishers become irresistible objects of fascination to students when they get drunk.

Anyway, he wrote to me, fining me a fiver. (Deans means fines as it said on the wall of Balliol). I wrote back and pleaded mitigation with such subtle casuistry (or so I thought) that it would have brought tears to a glass eye and applause from a Jesuit. But it was all to no avail; the stone in the Peach was hard and large indeed. He wrote again, “Laws are made for the guidance of the wise, Mr Roulston, but compel the obedience of the ignorant. See me at 9.00 tomorrow and bring your cheque book”.

Game, set and match to Dr Peach. I am always reminded of that little incident by the text from Matthew I quoted earlier. The Mosaic Law was in the first instance an offer of life after a prescribed and blessed pattern; but to those who cannot or will not accept what is offered in the Word of God they become stern and



uncompromising commandments. In this of course, lies the tragedy. The law for those who cannot love God becomes a raison d'être in itself and obedience to the letter of the law for its own sake can drive one further and further from the Spirit in which and for which it was given in the first place. It produces correctness without righteousness, legality without justice.

So how do we interpret Jesus' words?

Firstly, that the Law of God is a true and holy Law and is to be kept. Secondly we are not merely to obey the words but be true to the spirit behind the words. As Jesus goes on to say (Mt 5; 20) “**If your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes or Pharisees you will never get into the kingdom of heaven**”.

So, our Lord's teaching does not simplify things for us. He will not allow us to hide behind formulas and rubrics; simply doing this or not doing that as a shallow short cut to salvation. It is easy to see in some of the parables the shallow observance of the obviously caricatured Pharisee – full of self-importance and pride at paying his tithes and not doing wrong according to

the letter of the law but equally not doing right by the spirit of it. As we hear in Scripture **“It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh has nothing to offer”**. Equally it is easy to see the temptations of the pharisaic road and why all of us from time to time go down it to various degrees. We all need assurance; we all like to feel that there is a comfortable authority for us to follow. Simple guidelines to obey uncritically rather than to engage in debate or inner struggle. But, as that wise Greek philosopher Socrates once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living”.

The number of times the churches of the Anglican Communion are criticised for not speaking with a sufficiently authoritative voice or as a monolithic unity underlines this worry. Whilst it is right and proper for our church to stand up and be clear about the Doctrine it professes, the Truth it teaches and the morals it upholds, we cannot as individual Christians offload our personal responsibilities onto some outward Authority. If we all meekly accept without thought or question, we end up trying to obey commandments as things – as orders in isolation from the Living Faith from where they spring. We merely go through the motions. In short, we become Pharisaic.

So what do we do? One commentator after hearing a particularly liberal anti-authoritarian sermon on the Ten Commandments said it was not so much Ten Commandments as three “thou-shalt-nots” and seven “do-the-best you-cans”.

If we are to have a robust Christian Faith, it has to be a tested Christian faith. We all of us as individuals have to make our own

way to the truth; no-one else can do it for us. We cannot swallow a whole and undigested formula and expect it to produce a living faith; it will instead produce a legalistic petty-minded outlook like that so well characterised in the Pharisees.

So, we all fight our own battle to the truth, yes, but we do not have to do so in isolation. As Dean Inge said, “Christianity is about being free; it is not about being independent”. To help us on our journey there are many signposts, supports and gifts of His Grace on the route. We have our scriptures, we have our sacraments, we have the writings of the Church Fathers, we have our traditions. And, of course, in the Blessed Sacrament itself we have the ultimate sustainer, Christ’s Body and Blood; His life in us.

So whilst I have said we must all travel our own individual road to Life and Truth I would also say that to attempt this journey ignoring all the information and help that others can give us is at best foolhardy. It may be, that by guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, one among us may find a novel road which appears to us to fly in the face of received wisdom. But we should not expect such untried paths nor attempt them without fully appreciating the spiritual guides and maps as they are currently revealed to us. Christopher Columbus found America by a reinterpretation of the received wisdom of his age (even though he did not end up where he thought he had) but it is worth remembering that our psychiatric hospitals contain lots of people who think that they are Christopher Columbus, or Napoleon or Jesus. Deep contemplation,

study and prayer are required to stay on the signposted roads, let alone to try to go it alone cross-country. Therefore we should follow the Law of Christ in the Spirit of Christ. He, in His earthly life, transformed the Jewish Law. He fulfilled it by bringing it to life and to people's lives. It is this that we are mandated to follow. We will fall short, but we must get up and try again and again. Above all, as our Pharisees remind us, we must guard against complacency, guard against being superior in our attitude within the church or the world at large.

Ron Brown – not the ex MP for Leith – but the former Bishop of Birkenhead – tells a lovely story of churchy pride. It concerned a newly consecrated Bishop (who shall remain nameless) who visited a Primary School. He arrived dressed up to the nines in purple cassock cincture, buckle shoes, skullcap and wearing a pectoral cross big enough to stun a Rottweiler. In the first class his Lordship intoned “I will give ten pence to anyone who knows who I am”.

The kids were awestruck. They had never seen anything like this. Finally, one brave little chap said, “Please Sir, are you God?” The Bishop smiled, “No my son, I am not God – but here's a pound”. Ronald Brown's point here is obvious isn't it? The glory and the glitter of Episcopal preferment had turned (temporarily, one trusts) the new Bishop's head.

On being told that Atlee was a modest man, Churchill replied “Yes, he has much to be modest about”.

We must try to retain our humility. We have nothing to be conceited about because unlike the Pharisees we have been told by Christ Himself that we must make our truth the experience of the Living God fulfilling the laws, not hiding behind sterile codices and lifeless dogma. Ours is a living tradition. The law of itself has no dominion over us – it is there to guide us into a deeper and closer relationship with God.

Perhaps the Dean of Brasenose was right; the Law will act as a signpost for those who search; and as an answer for those who cannot, and for those who will not.

Father Joe

*In the fading of the summer sun,
the shortening of days, cooling breeze,
swallows' flight and moonlight rays
we see the Creator's hand.
In the browning of leaves once green,
morning mists, autumn chill,
fruit that falls, frost's first kiss
we see the Creator's hand.*



[www.faithandworship.com]

Date for your diary

Tim Russian died last year and due to Covid-19 restrictions his funeral did not allow everyone who would have wanted to pay their last respects to him to attend.

We will be holding a memorial Eucharist for Tim on Sunday 31 October at 10.30am

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We will never become a church that effectively reaches out to those who are missing if we shoot our wounded and emphasize our minuses. Instead of becoming fishers of people, as Christ calls us to be, we will be keepers of an ever-shrinking aquarium.

The next time you see geese heading south for the winter flying in a "V" formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following it. By flying in a "V" formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

Christians who share a common direction and a sense of community can get where they are travelling on the thrust and uplift of one another. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the draft and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the uplifting power of the bird immediately in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates to the back of the formation and another goose flies in point. It pays to take turns doing hard jobs with people at church, or with geese flying south. The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. What do we say when we honk from behind??

Finally, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. They stay with the wounded goose until it is able to fly again, and then they launch out on their own or with another formation, to catch up with their original group.

If people knew we would stand by them like that in the church, they would push down the walls to get in

(from an article in the newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Cedartown, Georgia)

You see, all we have to do in order to attract those who are missing, is to demonstrate to the world that we have as much sense as a goose. That seems to be a small enough price to pay to win the lost and minister to one another. Enough geese have enough sense to know that it works, it works every time.

May every one of us be blessed with the sense of a goose.

Vestry Report



Time seems to have stood still for much of the last year and so I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer months as the country has gently eased out of lockdown. Clearly the pandemic is not over, but it has been lovely to see family and friends again after so many months in prolonged hibernation.

Our services at St. Matthew's have largely returned to normal. The requirement to book in advance is no longer necessary, although we do still need to take contact details to comply with the track and trace. So, please do come along on the day to join us, we are even able to partake in some singing, so the more the merrier.

Sunday the 5th September saw our delayed annual Church social lunch. The sun shone

and it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and indeed several new ones. For many it had been over eighteen months since we had seen each other, so there was plenty of catching up to do. Maybe it is a sign of my age, but I did notice that many of children's church were considerably taller and in some cases with much deeper voices!! As always, my thanks to the social committee for a wonderful spread and for Joe and Jacqui for hosting us.

One more formal piece of business is to inform you that Father Joe Roulston has decided to take retirement from his role at Rosslyn Chapel next year. Joe has been at the heart of the St. Matthew's congregation for many years and whilst he richly deserves his retirement, his presence will be greatly missed by us all. We will of course confirm more details regarding Joe's leaving as well as the process to appoint his successor in due course.

In other news, following announcements in the Chapel in the Spring, the process of selling Moat View was initiated a few months ago. The property was offered to the current tenants who, subject to contract, intend to purchase the property.

I hope you enjoy the rest of the summer and look forward to seeing you all in the Chapel into the Autumn.

James Cardwell Moore
Vestry Chair

Rosslyn Chapel Trust Report



Following the second lockdown, we were very pleased to reopen the Chapel, Collegehill House and Rosslyn Castle at the end of April. Visitor numbers at the Chapel have grown fairly steadily since and, at the time of writing, the next gap in bookings for guests to stay at either the Castle or Collegehill House is January next year! We have retained a number of safety measures at the Chapel including asking visitors to book visits in advance through our website and managing the number of visitors on site at any time through our timeslots which still operate throughout the day.

We had some good press coverage in June after our new stained-glass window, marking the 25th anniversary of Rosslyn Chapel Trust, was unveiled by Helen and Peter Rosslyn. The window was designed by Joe Tilson and made for us by Mark Bambrough, of Scottish Glass Studios. Joe Tilson made his name as one of the leading figures associated with the British Pop Art movement in the 1960s; Mark has had a long connection with the Chapel's windows, as he was responsible for their conservation and cleaning during the major conservation project, and then installed protective glazing outside the ground floor windows a few years ago, and we were delighted that he agreed to make this new window for us.

Our attention is now turning to Rosslyn Castle, where applications for planning, listed building and scheduled monument consent will soon be submitted to Midlothian Council and Historic Environment Scotland. A major programme of restoration and repair is being proposed here to bring long-term benefit to one of Midlothian's most historic sites – for more details on our plans, please see our website.

As you may already know, very sadly we lost William recently at the ripe old age of 17. He had been ill for some time, and deteriorated very quickly, so just slipped quietly away in the care of ICR Vets, in Loanhead and with two colleagues beside him. He will obviously be missed by all of us as well as by our many visitors – our tribute to him on the Trust's Facebook page was seen by over 155,000 people and attracted over 500 comments. Earlier in the year, we commissioned a painting of him by our former Guide, Grace Maran, and look forward to displaying it soon in the visitor centre as a permanent memorial of William the Chapel Cat.

Ian Gardner
Director, Rosslyn Chapel Trust

PARISH LUNCH

After a really long time it was fantastic to have so many friends attend our Parish lunch where the sun shone on us and we all ate far too much! Some photos from the day below – good to see Fr Joe retains his ability to be looking anywhere but at the camera 😊 Looking forward to lots more opportunities to get together in the future.





WILLIAM ... A TRIBUTE FROM FR JOE

It is always sad when we lose a longstanding and faithful member of our congregation. A member who was unfailingly present at Mass, always on time and who, over the years, slept through more of my sermons than the rest of you!

I refer to William, our chapel cat, who has died peacefully at a great age – about 17 I think.

I knew exactly his place in the pecking order, and mine, at Rosslyn from my earliest days here. An American tourist once phoned the Visitor Centre and asked, “What time is Mass on Sunday?” On being told, this was followed quickly by, “Will William be there?”

He brought immense pleasure to many in our congregation and to our visitors. He also volunteered for photo opportunities! I have a lovely photo of the Director of the Edinburgh Festival, Fergus Linehan, and his wife Sophie on their wedding day. William is centre stage, sitting on the train of Sophie’s dress!

It is said that dogs have owners; cats have staff. This was certainly true of William. He arranged his timing and visits to congregation members to perfection; thereby ensuring he had at least three breakfasts every Sunday. I hope he will continue his regular article in Grapevine, perhaps as “A view from my new pew”?

I shall miss him.

Father Joe

SERVICES

Date	DAY	SERVICE	TIME
All services below are subject to change based on direction from the Scottish Episcopal Diocesan guidelines and the Scottish government directives			
12 September	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
19 September	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
26 September	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
3 October	Sunday	Harvest Festival	10.30am
10 October	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
17 October	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
24 October	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
31 October	Sunday	Tim Russian Memorial Eucharist	10.30am
7 November	Sunday	Eucharist Thirsting After Righteousness (Covid allowing)	10.30am
14 November	Sunday	Remembrance Sunday	10.30am
21 November	Sunday	Eucharist	10.30am
28 November	Sunday	Advent Sunday	10.30am
5 December	Sunday	Eucharist Followed by AGM	10.30am

Please note that we are reviewing Children's Church and when this will restart and in what format.

WHO'S WHO AT ST. MATTHEW'S	
Ministry team	
Revd Dr Joe Roulston <i>Priest in Charge</i>	0131 654 1068
Harry Stoddart <i>Lay Reader</i>	-
Vestry	
James Cardwell Moore <i>Chair of Vestry</i>	0131 448 1935
Mike Fitchett <i>Vestry Secretary</i>	0131 440 4569
Ian McLeish <i>Treasurer</i>	0131 667 6561
Doris Nelson <i>People's Warden</i>	-
Harry Stoddart <i>Lay Representative</i>	-
Shonagh Toulouse <i>Priest's Warden</i>	0131 629 9020
Belle Dieckfoss <i>Alternate Lay Representative</i>	0131 440 2824
Jo Barrow	0131 440 2136
Joy Norridge	0131 440 2826
Roger Whait	07593 641724
Jill Black <i>Sacristan</i>	0131 443 2116
Domhnull Dean <i>Sacristan</i>	0754 0657 360
Jacqui Roulston <i>Grapevine editor</i>	0131 654 1068
Sue Fitchett <i>Flowers</i>	0131 440 4569
Rosslyn Chapel Trust	0131 440 2159