

## September 2020

We are all called to be ministers of God's good news. It is not easy to be a bearer of good news in the current circumstances when there is a pandemic in public health, recession in the economy and the woes and difficulties of society and Church to be worried about. Where is the good news in all of that?

My home parish is Saint Matthew in Clubmoor, Liverpool and it was in that church that I was ordained a priest 31 years ago(!) At the top of the main aisle, just as you enter the sanctuary, is a mosaic, set in the floor, of our patron and it was at that spot that I lay during the singing of the litany of the saints at the ordination Mass. When I was a parishioner, I'm not sure the picture had made much of an impression on me: when you have prostrated with your head resting on the mosaic it certainly does!

Some years later, when I was chaplain at Southport Hospital, I remember being asked by a patient what was my favourite passage of the good news. I realised that it was a portion of Saint Matthew's Gospel, where he recounts the words of Jesus:

Come to me all you who labour and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (*Matthew 11: 28-30*)

We are heavy burdened in so many ways at the moment - for many of us the requirements of physical distancing and the need to wear a face covering are but relatively minor inconveniences in the face of the poverty, illness and bereavement suffered by so many in our own communities and around the world. What would be worse is if the physical distancing became something which renders us insensitive to the pain and the needs of others, be those needs physical, emotional or spiritual.

It is good to have a place where we can find rest, where we can put everything into perspective, and where gentleness and true humility are understood as virtues, the practice of which shows that we have truly learned the lessons of the Gospel and therefore can be bearers of good news to all peoples.

Saint Matthew - pray for us.

*Canon Philip*

*The feast of Saint Matthew, apostle and gospel writer, is celebrated on Monday September 21<sup>st</sup>.*