

Sermon, 25.06.2023. 3rd Sunday after Trinity

Jeremiah 20.7-13, Psalm 69.8-11, Romans 6.1b-11, **Matthew 10.24-39**

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight O Lord our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

Dear Friends,

We begin by turning our attention to the reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah. In this prayerful conversation with God Jeremiah complains about the fact that his preaching is mocked and not taken seriously. What he is doing is tiring him out and he wants to give up preaching altogether. He will preach no more. Isn't that a strange confession? Give up preaching? There is no easier, more convenient, more stress-free service in the world than preaching. Why? Because preaching isn't work at all, it's just an occasional public performance. Preaching represents an easy and pleasant life. Despite this commonly held view, professional preaching work is not one of the most popular professions. Why don't people flock to this ministry if it's so easy? Why does Jesus say: The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few? We think it's always easier for the other person.

However, every trade and profession has its own difficulties and challenges, which only those who work in the field really know. The old gentleman who spends his days hoeing in his garden considers the career of a teacher to be a pleasant thing; while the teacher, who tells the students to pay attention a hundred and one times, doing so in vain, might be envious of the person who has nothing else to do but sunbathe and hoe the garden beds. One naively thinks of the other as relaxing. However, our opinion would change if we stood among

those hoeing in the blazing sun, or when unruly children need to be nervously warned hour after hour, day after day.

Like Jeremiah I too have experienced feelings of wanting to give up not only because of my unsuccessful sermons or mistaken deeds, but also because of the burning fire within me. A burning fire which was within me saying stick with the vocation of priesthood. Yes, I can say it was the Holy Spirit, as well as my endurance that kept me going, but I was also sustained by memories in the life of faith. I am sure the year I have spent among you will find its place amongst those memories. Memories which will strengthen me for service in God's church in the coming years.

I am sharing the above with you because this is the last Sunday sermon I will preach as your intern. Thanks be to God and thanks be to God for your prayers. It is my first sermon as a received Anglican believer. At this point of my life I am encouraged to recount all the gifts and graces I have received. My family are not here but I want to say thank you to them especially to my sister, who prayed for me before I was born. I give thanks for my friends, classmates, acquaintances and all those whom I have met over the years. I am very thankful for the bishops who ordained me, and through their hands, I received the biggest gift of my life, apostolic priestly minister. And I am happy as I look back over my years of worship among my fellow-congregants at Saint Margaret's, Budapest.

I arrived with the idea of what I would be giving to this church during the year. What I would be giving you. I owe you a confession. You know I am relatively young, however despite my young age during my internship I became very rich.

To this richness belong all the experiences I have had here. The talks with my mentors Patrick and Robert, their advice and guidance. I am unable to express

adequately my gratitude for this congregation which has such a good, healthy and ethnically mixed membership.

I proceed by recounting all my experiences in the calendar year of Christ Church. The first was AfricaNight, where I felt what I had heard before: Africa is indeed the cradle of humanity. I am very thankful for Christmas, when we celebrated together one of my favourite services, The Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. I must also mention the Three Holy Days of Easter (the Triduum) which awakened memories of my childhood. I was happy and honoured to sing the Exsultet (The Song of Easter Joy) at the Easter Vigil service. I am very thankful for the Lenten groups I could lead and for my very faithful Bible Study Group, who appreciated my stutterings and mutterings about the Word of God. I am sure you will agree with me if I also mention our two last events. First, the Lange Nacht der Kirchen in which I participated. On that day I also received the result of my final interview of the Discernment Process giving me a green light to proceed. What a happy day that was. The other, which is a deep memory, is when I saw and experienced how the whole congregation worked together like one body at the Street Party. All of you used your skills to work for it. Last year I was just a visitor at the Street Party, but this year I was pleased to be a part of it.

I am so glad that I could also experience how we are growing in faith and in numbers. I am proud that I could sponsor a friend of mine for his baptism and that I was received into the Communion of the Church of England with others as well as the confirmands Today I am present for the baptism of one of our youngest members. In a couple of minutes a small lady, Malkia, is going to become a child of God.

Prayer, ministry, sermons, invitations, talks, the interreligious weekend and pastoral visits – these are the events at which I was able to share my faith with you and through which I was able to grow in faith.

After this long list I think it is right if I use a word of the 16th century English liturgy: beloved! Beloved is the right word, because over the past 10 months I have loved this congregation and I hope, I feel it, you have loved me too. So, beloved, I owe you a confession. I told you I became rich, but at the same time I am totally indebted. Indebted because of the love you have showered on me, and I have no idea how I can give it back to you. I guess the best way is to follow what the Gospel says: 'Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'

My life looked so easy and my way was so straight, but I was ready to lose it. It was a hard decision to take a different path and it was accompanied by some fear but in Christ and through Christ I have found a better way. At the final interview of the discernment process one of the advisors asked me what my sacrifice for God is. I was then and I still am ready to leave my home and to move to another country and to speak another language and to live in another culture. I do it for Christ's sake. In this most recent period of my life, among you, I have been confirmed by God and by your love for me that I made a good decision and I am ready, once again, to lose my life for His sake. This congregation and your names will stay on my prayer list. With these prayers that I shall pray I want to say to each of you a very big thank you!

I will close with some words from a Hungarian poet, but don't worry I found a good English translation, so it is going to be intelligible. 😊 It represents my intention of how I arrived here at Christ Church last September and the feeling

how I want to continue my journey. The poet is Frigyes Karinthy and the title of the poem is *Foreword*.

From many on offer, a pulpit I'll hire,

Let me go up it to what I aspire.

I don't yet know it, I don't know what I'll say,

But think 'tis glad tidings I'll bring today.

Glad tidings, good news, rainbows and secrets

For you, whom I loved,

Whilst wide-eyed, standing, for wonders I waited.

Which I cannot tell to anyone,

Which I now will tell to everyone.

Amen.