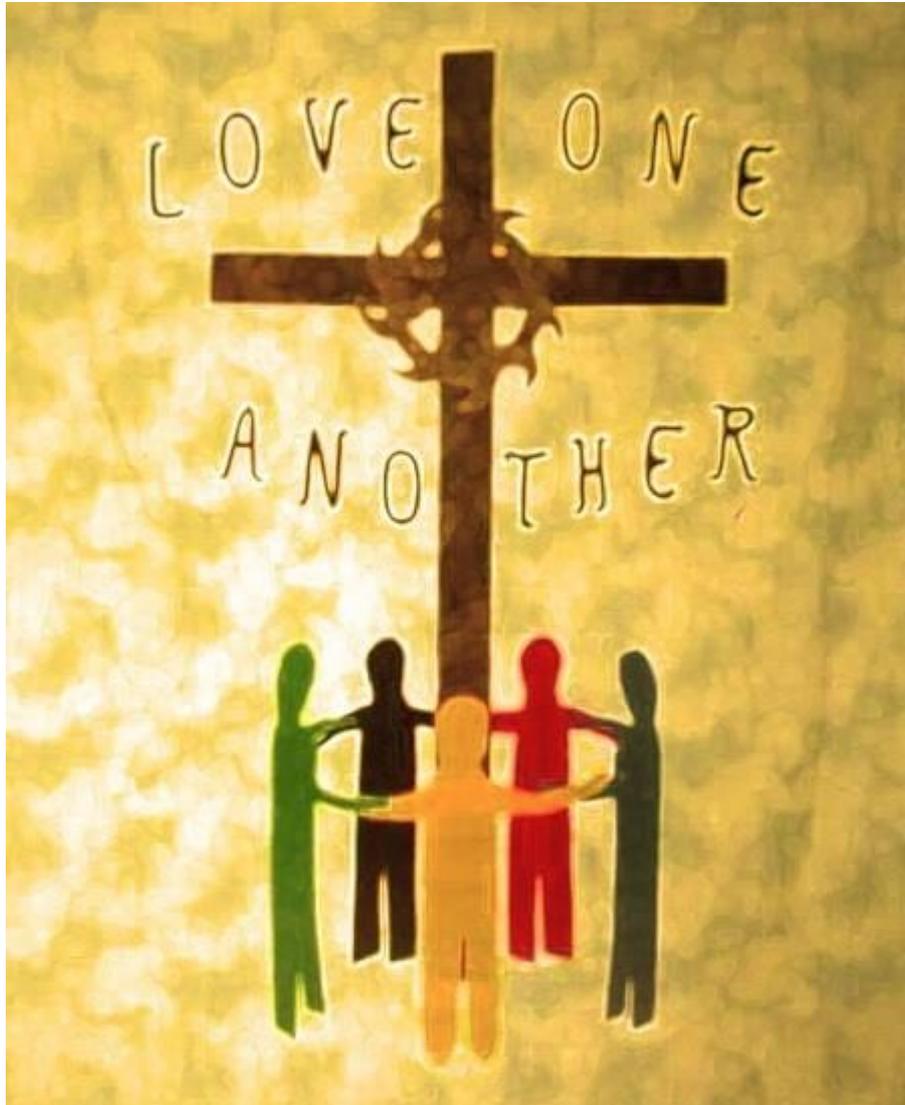


St. Mary's Church Cubbington



Sunday after
Ascension Day

May 24th

Sunday Message 24th May 2020

Hello again and greetings from the vicarage.

I wonder what you have all been doing this last week.

Well amongst all the calls, emails, Zoom/Teams meetings, and other things that vicars do like pray and read the bible:–

I've managed to spend some time in the garden.

For those of you who can picture the back garden - there were several additional hedges besides the main hedge with the field.

Having them made it harder to cut the grass and they formed a bit of a dead space which was hard to keep tidy

So, I've removed them and laid 20 square meters of turf.

It was very enjoyable working outside in the beautiful sunshine – but my shoulders are rather sore – that'll teach me to take my shirt off!

Last week I mentioned Ascension Day which was last Thursday.

If you can see a computer there is a good resource called 'Thy Kingdom Come' which was started by the Archbishop of Canterbury some years ago.

There are two things that I would recommend – 'Journey with Mary' and 'The Fathers Love Prayer Journal'.

Of course you don't need a computer to keep a prayer journal anyone can do this all you need is a notebook to write in each day what/who you are praying for.

It's interesting to look back and see just how many prayers have been answered.

Once again this year, I registered St. Mary's Church.

The focus is to pray for eleven days from Ascension Day to Pentecost along with Christians around the world for **five** people you know who you would like to see come to know Jesus.

One of our readings this Sunday is from the book of Acts chapter 1 verses 6 – 14.

The book of Acts begins where the Gospels leave off – and it reports the actions of the Apostles and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our reading tells how Jesus and His apostles were on top of the Mount of Olives.

Where He tells them they will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and then He is lifted up by a cloud and disappears.



View from the top of the Mount of Olives looking towards Jerusalem.

I can't help feeling for the apostles; they have gone through so much.

They have been with Jesus for a few years; they have witnessed His teaching and miracles.

They watched Him being arrested, killed on a cross, then come back to life – and now He has been picked up by a cloud!

None of this is what anyone would consider to be normal – but then this was Jesus, God's Son.

The apostles returned to Jerusalem and to the 'Upper Room'.

It is considered that this was the same room where Jesus held the Last Supper.

On my first visit to Jerusalem I had the pleasure of staying with the Syrian Orthodox in their Convent inside the Old City.



The Convent has a crypt below the chapel and it is said that this was the room where Jesus met with His disciples the 'Upper Room'.

This confused me, how could an Upper Room be below ground level.

Well after visiting the Jerusalem Archaeological Park it became clear.

Starting at today's city level you walk down one level at a time going back in history at each level.

The lowest level is the time of Jesus and it is possible to walk on the original stone path that Jesus would have walked on as He made His way to the entrance to the temple.

I found this a very moving time knowing that I was walking in His footsteps literally.

In order to get to Jesus' time, you descend a considerable amount and it becomes clear how Jerusalem like many other places has over the centuries become much higher.

Making it possible that the Upper Room is now below today's ground level. Like many of the biblical sites in the Holy Land there are other places that also confess to be the Upper Room.

But I like to think this is the place where Jesus and His disciples gathered.

It is geographically in the correct place.



St. Marks Syrian Orthodox Convent

You may have noticed from the pictures that on the altar is a Cross of Nails, this was presented by Coventry Cathedral to the Syrian Orthodox as a sign of their reconciliation work and their links with the diocese of Coventry.

I have very fond memories of my ten days living with them. They were a very

welcoming and generous community and treated me so well.

On my second visit to the Holy Land I went back to see them and gave them some of the photo's I had taken previously.

It is truly amazing to think that from that small Upper Room in Jerusalem, the apostles prayed whilst waiting to receive the Holy Spirit.

Then at Pentecost they found the strength to go out into the world and confess their faith in Jesus Christ, which through the ages has been passed down to us.

Whilst we wait for Pentecost we can do exactly as the apostles did and like so many other Christians around the world are doing.

Remembering that we are today's apostles with the responsibility to pass on the faith for future generations.

As we are confined to our homes we can pray for others and the Holy Spirit – so that when Pentecost comes, or may be a few weeks after when lockdown has passed we too can go out into the world and share our faith with others.

Reverend Graham



A few questions you might like to think about.

- In praying for your five people what will they mainly benefit from in coming to know God?
- If anyone were to ask you “tell me what makes your life better by being a Christian” what would be your answer?
- Why do you think Jesus told the apostles to stay in Jerusalem?
- The disciples spent this time before Pentecost praying, what do think their prayers were?
- Whilst we pray for our five people, what would you like others to pray for you?
- The apostles left the Upper Room to go out into the world to spread the word, what obstacles do you think they faced?
- What obstacles do we face when we try and spread the word?
- The apostles relied on the Holy Spirit to help them overcome the obstacles, do you think that the Holy Spirit helps you and if so how?

*Prayer
Journal*



The Father's Love



**A Prayer from
the Prayer
Journal.**

Loving God,
thank you that
before we loved
you, You loved
us first.

Please help me
by the power of
your Holy Spirit
to love as you
love,

so that my five
people may
come to know
you.

Amen.

For any of your family, friends
and neighbours
who have access to the internet,
you might like to suggest
that they look at the church's website
where they will be able to see this
message and other useful information.

Also, anyone you know with
Primary Age school children will find
stories from 'Open The Book'.

Tell them to Google
St. Mary's Church Cubbington.