

Christ Church Freemantle

Sunday 17th May; Sixth Sunday of Easter

Gospel Reading: John 14.15-21

Keeping promises is never an easy thing to do. Yet promises are an essential part of our lives; the promise to help a friend, to pay allegiance to a group or a society, marriage promises, promises made at Baptism or Confirmation. We are expected to have the strength to keep that promise once it is made – the future course of events depends upon it. But keeping a promise is not always straightforward; circumstances may change, you may leave the group, love withers, disasters happen, trust fails, we are human and fallible.

During these difficult days of the pandemic through which we are living, we depend on the promises of those who lead our country that they will keep us safe. Thus far we have been saved from a much greater disaster because they have been able to carry out many of the promises made. Some promises have not been fulfilled – whether because the aim was too high, or because conditions changed, or simply that the promise made was unrealistic in the first place. Other promises have certainly been kept, and we are now seeing hopeful signs that the virus is beginning to decline. But the future will depend upon all of us – to keep our promises to behave sensibly, to consider others as well as our own families, to be alert to danger.



In today's Gospel, Jesus is making a promise to his friends. He's leaving them and knows how much they will miss him – but he's not leaving them to continue his work on their own.

“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever.....This is the Spirit of truth....and he will in you.”

Jesus keeps his promises through thick and thin. We are not promised that we shall be exempt from the difficulties of life – being a Christian isn't an insurance against adversity – but it means we do not face them alone. The Holy Spirit – the indwelling of God within us (what a former Bishop of Winchester John V. Taylor called “The Go Between God”) is with us in all our daily challenges. I found this quote from C. S. Lewis recently:

Life with God is not immunity from difficulties, but peace in difficulties.

This week we shall remember the great moment of the Ascension, the return of Jesus to the Father. Sadly we cannot celebrate the feast together in a physical sense, but through the Spirit which God has given each one of us we shall continue to be united as we face the continuing threat of Coronavirus and the huge challenge it has brought upon us all. Our Lord is with us still, and he will not let us down.

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