



### **Lent challenges**

We don't enter the kingdom of God by thinking about it or by listening to one another talk about it. But we do it by following Jesus example. It is clear that Jesus intended for his disciples to actually do the things he did and taught 'love your enemies, give your money to the poor, love your neighbour, blessed are the peacemakers...' we are told anyone who hears these words and puts them into practice is like a wise person who builds there house on the rock. So we will be going on a journey through lent looking at how we can follow in Jesus footsteps putting what he said and did into practice and seeking his Kingdom here on earth and here in Poole.

Anyone who tries to do the things Jesus taught and did will quickly discover that putting the teachings of Jesus into practice is extremely difficult, if not impossible, without a source of power and love greater than our own. To do it we need inner transformation which is why one week we will be focusing on prayer.

Jesus was a rabbi, and he invited his disciples to make dramatic changes in their lives – to risk new ways of being and doing and if we listen carefully we can hear his voice calling for us also to follow in his footsteps and pleading with us to be his hands and feet to a hurting world.

## The reign of God

There is a danger that Easter is watered down. What should be a dangerous message to the unjust status quo becomes simply a story about how there is life after death and the nice idea is pedalled “look good stuff comes out of bad stuff...” how different that is to the early Christian hope – which was the Jewish hope underway. The Jewish hope wasn’t that our disembodied soul would escape this world. The Jewish hope is that in an age where injustice, violence, and decay seem to reign that God would set all that right. That love would reign.

The challenge over this lent period is for us to be formed into a people who enact what the world looks like when God reigns. In a world motivated by the primal lusts for money, sex and power, we are to be a prophetic witness of a future motivated by love.

We are to imagine here in Poole what it would look like if God reigned here and seek to live it out.

### Challenge

- **Write a poem or reflection of what Poole would look like if God reigned here. There is an example from someone asking this question looking over their city Glasgow on the next page. What things would God be pleased about in Poole? What things would he want to change? For those who want to there will be an opportunity to share these with one another in a service at the end of Lent.**
- **Think about being motivated by love this week particularly when it is difficult - The spirit inside of you is contagious. Whether that spirit is full of joy or if it is fixated on making others feel whatever pain you're feeling. It's amazing how quickly someone with a negative attitude can completely ruin your day, so don't let them. Remember to be gracious to those who are having terrible days, and in doing so, perhaps you can change the course of THEIR day, and not the other way around. The way we respond to others has great power, so use that power to spread joy. From the person at the petrol station, to the checkout person at the shops, to your co-workers, love the 'hell' out of everyone you encounter and start a small revolution in the midst of what we usually consider mundane. God knows we all need it!**

## **I saw a vision (example from someone in Glasgow)**

I saw a vision it was last Thursday at 11 O'clock in the morning:

I was standing on the Necropolis, looking down over the city; And the cold blue winter sky broke open above my head And the spirit of God breathed on my eyes And my eyes were opened.

I saw Glasgow, the holy city, coming down out of heaven; Shining like a rare jewel, sparkling like "clear water in the eye of the sun"; And all the sickness was gone from the city, There were no more suburbs and schemes; No difference between Bearsden and Drumchapel. I saw the Clyde running with the water of life, As bright as crystal, As clear as glass, The children of Glasgow swimming in it.

And the spirit showed me the tree of life growing in Glasgow Green  
I looked out and there were no more homeless people, No more women working the streets,  
No more needles in the alleys, HIV and Aids were things of the past, There were no more  
racist attacks, No more gay bashing, No more rapists, No more stabbings No more Protestants  
and Catholics No more IRA graffiti, no more Orange marches Because there was no more  
hate!

And I saw women walking safe at nights, Saw the men were full of passion and gentleness,  
That none of the children were ever abused, Because the people's sex was full of justice and  
of joy.

I saw an old woman throw back her head and laugh like a young girl; and when the sky closed  
back, her laughter rang in my head for days and days and would not go away.  
This is what I saw, looking over the Gallowgate, Looking up from the city of death; And I knew  
then that there would be a day of resurrection, And I believe That there will be a day of  
resurrection.

