

Team Jesus



Heather Cooke *reflects on* Acts 1:15-17. 21-end

Google the word “interregnum”, and chances are you’ll either find Oliver Cromwell or a parish struggling with a vacancy. The latter usage is often frowned upon these days, for good reason. The word means the time between two reigns, but gone are the days when the vicar was king – these days team ministry rules, at least in principle!

On this Sunday after the ascension we read about Team Jesus filling the gap left by Judas. Spot the similarities in this passage with the process of appointing a new vicar today. Not least, sadly, the low number of candidates. Of those hundred and twenty believers, only two apparently fulfil the criteria – to have been around throughout the ministry of Jesus, until he was “taken up”... and to be male! We clearly can’t ask for the first, and rarely stipulate the second, but we still draw up a wish list. Then we ask God’s opinion. We may not cast lots, but we surround interviews and discussions with prayer.

In one sense, we are indeed between two reigns. At the ascension Jesus was “taken up” to his heavenly throne, and we wait for his coming again in glory, to establish the kingdom of heaven for ever. Meanwhile, in appointing a new vicar or in anything else, are we sometimes too “taken up” with our own likes and dislikes to pay attention to what God wants? 🙏

King of Kings, your reign is eternal but we are living in this time and place. Show us what you have chosen for us to do as witnesses to the resurrection, and help us work together to bless our communities. Amen.

Christian Aid Week

by Christine Clark

Christine Clark tells us about Christian Aid week, which starts today.

When Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti, Marcelin lost his home, livestock and possessions. His family was living in a disused shower block until Christian Aid gave him the help they needed.

Many churches organise house-to-house collections during Christian Aid Week. I usually take a couple of local roads, delivering the envelopes and returning a few days later to collect them, often needing to return again for people

who were out. Although Christian Aid appears to be a charity that non-churchgoers are willing to give to, every year it seems to be more difficult. People are reluctant, or out when you call, or make an excuse, or just give less.

Some churches have stopped the house-to-house collections in favour of other fundraising activities. That’s all right – it’s good to move forward and find new ways. What is important, for Marcelin and his family and others in such desperate situations, is that we do something. 🙏

“God will forgive me; it’s his job.”

Christian Johann Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), German poet

An Egyptian pilgrimage

by Sr Janet Fearn

Sr Janet continues her reflection on some of the places she visited in Egypt.

Jewish tradition holds that the ancient synagogue in Cairo marks the place where Moses was concealed in the bullrushes. There’s no concrete proof, but the association persists. Treasuring a spiritually precious memory, it is perhaps inevitable that the story told in the Jewish community progressed from, “This represents the place...”, to, “This is the place where...”.

As early Christian understanding of Jesus grew, people began to recognise the parallels between the stories of Moses and Jesus, “the new Moses”.

Last week we saw how it’s believed that Mary, Joseph and the Christ child spent some time in Cairo. Do we need tangible proof of Moses’ watery concealment, or the Holy Family’s home? Jesus said: “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe” (John 20:29). What matters is that Jesus – and Moses, Mary and Joseph – are with us always, in our hearts. 🙏