

*"But God sent me ahead of you ...to save your lives by a great deliverance."
(Genesis 45.7)*

When I was a curate in Shrewsbury, a lovely lady from the congregation made me a beautiful red stole for Pentecost. I was really touched, especially when she drew my attention to two little words she had embroidered on the inside. "I remember you saying", she said, "that these were your two most favourite words in the whole Bible." Those two little words are "BUT GOD..."

As we approach the end of Joseph's story in Genesis, you could sum it all up in those words: "BUT GOD..."

Joseph was spoilt, arrogant, immature and insensitive – but God knew there were qualities in him that he could use. Joseph was betrayed and abused – but God used that situation to get him to the place where he was needed. Joseph was the victim of false accusations; he was used for what people could get out of him and then forgotten – but God sustained him, kept him going, until the time was right for him to use the gift he'd been given. But God.

Remarkably, when Joseph does his great reveal and has his "Surprise!! It's me!"-moment with his brothers he is able to see his life through this 'but God' lens. "Don't be distressed or angry with yourselves for selling me here. This famine is going to be long and severe. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve and save you."

The things that had happened to Joseph could have caused him to doubt God's goodness or led to passivity and defeatism. But, rather than resignation, Joseph embraces a vocation. Through it all Joseph had a vision that there was something better in store, beyond his current situation, something worth hanging on in for. Now, he will provide for his family, indeed for many, and comfort them and speak prophetically to them about God's future deliverance.

This raises all sorts of questions for me, mostly of the variety: does God allow or cause bad things to happen in order to bring about some higher purpose? I'm not sure I know how to make sense of that.

I do know that only Joseph, as the one who has suffered and been wronged, has the right to make this connection between his own suffering and God's purposes. It's not for others to make that link for him. And that prompts me to ask myself: so, what about me? Am I able to look at my life's ups and downs (particularly the downs) as part of God's purposes; as something that he can use? And what difference might it make to me and others if I can? What "But God" is in store for me and for those that God might lead me to?

And what vision will keep me going? Perhaps, ultimately, the story of that other Son of Israel; summed up in Peter's words at Pentecost "Jesus of Nazareth... ..handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. BUT GOD raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him." (Acts 2.22-24) "BUT GOD..." They may be just two little words, but they are gamechangers.

Sermon videos of St Mary's Values

Our recent sermons series on on our church values can be found on our YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3RShnzNqIS-bTomDxAxqJA> Feel free to share this link with any family or friends who might be interested in seeing what St Mary's are doing. Hard copies of all the sermons are now available in church.

Also available on our Youtube channel are all the services we have managed to record during lock-down along with all the daily reflections Catherine and Ian recorded.

Regular Services

To join any of our regular Zoom services, click on the links below. If you need a copy of the liturgy for any of the services, please contact the Church Office.

Sunday Morning 9.00am Holy Communion in CHURCH

This service will alternate between Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship settings. **We still need more welcomers for this service. If you can help, please let Helen Hughes at the Church Office know.**

Sunday 10.30am (Breaking Bread) ZOOM

These services are alternating between a Breaking Bread service and a Morning Worship service.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85337124930?pwd=NFdMTzRMR2JXbXRoSctVRS9PSkZkZz09>

Meeting ID: 853 3712 4930 Password: 867888

The readings this Sunday are: Genesis 45.1-15 and Matthew 15.10-20.

Wednesday Morning Prayer 10.00am ZOOM

a short informal service lasting about 30 minutes

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89943278704?pwd=RytPQ3RmOG5yYlBpUWpoWWkxWGFEZz09>

Meeting ID: 899 4327 8704 Password: 730701

Thursday Evening Compline 7.00pm ZOOM

Zoom link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78321229825?pwd=R2lUZUJJMDRnTGhINIFPejRLTW5Xdz09>

Meeting ID: 783 2122 9825 Password: 2KrMnH

If you would be willing to read or do the intercessions for any of our services please let Helen Hughes know at the Church Office.

You can join any of the above meetings by phone using any of the following numbers and the meeting IDs and passwords above:
0203 481 5237 / 0203 481 5240
0131 460 1196 / 0203 051 2874

Needed:

Financial Assistant and Treasurer

We have two very important roles that we need to fill soon, those of Treasurer and Financial Assistant. The Financial Assistant is a new role and involves elements of 'book-keeping'. Bank statements will need to be reconciled, invoices logged and data entered into our software package (Finance Coordinator), which will produce the necessary income and expenditure reports. Full training on the software will be given. The Financial Asst will work closely with the Treasurer, whose job it will be to oversee the Finance Team, review monthly financial reports with the Financial Asst and report to the PCC, working with them to produce an annual budget and address any financial questions. For more information about these roles contact David Costelloe on 01630 657451.

Prayer Requests



Cynthia Costelloe was discharged from the Royal Stoke Hospital on Monday following a quintuple bypass heart operation the previous Wednesday. She is recovering slowly at home, and David is doing the housework. We would like to thank everyone for their prayers and good wishes. The Lord has been kind to us.

Thank you also for your continued prayers for James Harvey.

Volunteers needed

We really appreciate all those who have volunteered to help with Wednesday private prayer sessions and for the Sunday 9.00am services. However, we could always use more. If you think you will be able to help please contact the church office or Avril Innocent to let them know.

Foodbank Items Needed



Stock Items urgently required

Sponge Puddings/Slab Cakes	Toilet Rolls
Shampoo	Hair Conditioner
Washing Up Liquid	Dog Food—Dry
Corned Beef	Tinned Potatoes

For Children's Holiday Lunches

Tinned Chilli Con Carne	Tinned Mince Beef	
Tinned Ravioli /Spaghetti	Tinned Hotdogs	
Tinned Fruit	Biscuits	Cereal Bars

We have plenty of

Pasta, Pasta Sauce, Fish & Tea.

Donations can be dropped off at the Parish Rooms on Tuesdays and Fridays 9-11am. If you are unable to bring donations to the Parish Rooms or to the drop-off points in our local supermarkets, please contact Catherine McBride or Carol Corney, who can arrange to have someone come and pick up your donations.

Staying in Touch

Our Church Office is not staffed at the moment, but e-mails and phone messages are being picked up regularly:

Phone: 01630 653505 **E-mail:** stmarysmd@btinternet.com

We will continue to post information to our website and Facebook page:

Website: www.stmarysmarketdrayton.org.uk

Facebook: @StMarysMarketDrayton

Vicar: Catherine McBride

E-mail: vicarofstmarys@gmail.com (please note change)

Phone: 01630 656943

If you do not wish to continue to receive these newsletters, please let us know.