



MAY 2021 BULLETIN FOR ALL MEMBERS

Over the last year we have needed to find new ways of doing things. We appreciate that Zoom meetings and emails are not suitable for all members. We therefore maintain our commitment to share written updates. All members will have received our diocesan newsletter "Communicate" and the excellent new publication direct from Mary Sumner House "Connected". After a challenging year there is hope on the horizon. Revd. Christine Ostler shares a reflection on the importance of prayer and refreshment in our faith.

RETREATS AND QUIET DAYS

'In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed.' *Mark 1.35*

'And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray.'
Matthew.' 14.23

'Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed,' *Luke 22.41*

Here are just three examples of Jesus removing himself from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and going off on his own to pray. Sometimes the disciples showed their displeasure that they couldn't find him and often the crowds were still clamouring for his attention but he still slipped away to be on his own. Why? He did this because he knew that to minister to others he first needed his Father to minister to him. When he needed to make difficult decisions, such as selecting his first disciples, he needed to consult his Father. When he needed courage to 'drink from the cup of suffering', 'an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength' *Luke 22.43*. Sometimes he just needed to rest.

If there were times when Jesus needed to slip away to be quiet, to be still, to sit with his Father, how much more do we need such times if we are to live out our calling to follow Jesus.

I have to admit I'm not very good at following my own advice! I tend to be a Martha rather than a Mary. I feel compelled to finish all my chores, to be up to date with emails, to have made those phone calls before I take myself off to my prayer corner to sit with Jesus and let him minister to me. But if I give way to this compulsion (whose chores are ever done? and as fast as I reply to emails more come in) I inevitably run out of time and my quiet time is curtailed or even doesn't happen. The result is that my spiritual batteries are not fully charged and I end up making poor decisions and not ministering to others efficiently. I have to follow Jesus' lead and just slip away.

The joy of attending a Quiet Day, Quiet Evening or a Retreat of a few days organised by someone else is that it is so much easier to resist distractions or calls on one's time, at least

I find this to be the case. This is why we at Mothers' Union run such events. Your local church might also offer these opportunities as do retreat centres such as Launde Abbey.

I've just finished reading the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell's latest book, *Dear England, Finding Hope, Taking Heart and Changing the World*. He says this about prayer:

'Prayer is opening up your heart and mind to God and letting God fill you with God's love. Moreover, prayer is not about bending God's ear or trying to change God's mind, but about allowing your will and your agenda to be shaped by God's will and God's agenda.' p.127

It's an excellent book and I warmly recommend it. Stephen Cottrell wrote it in response to a question he was asked whilst buying a coffee on Paddington Station, *What made you become a priest?* He didn't have time to say more than that he believed in God and wanted to change the world, but he wanted to say so much more, hence the book.

I do hope that you have the opportunity to attend a Quiet Day, Evening or Retreat and let God fill you with love.

Revd Christine Ostler

GETTING RESTARTED AND MOVING FORWARD

We all look forward to meeting and worshipping together. However, Forum in June will again be virtual. **We will meet at 4p.m. on Saturday 12th June.** Bring your own tea and cake! We are making the most of this opportunity as our guest speaker will be Chief Executive Bev Julian. We also hope to hear from our WWP Sheran Harper. We will share the link widely nearer the time but it is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82793961524> Meeting ID: 827 9396 1524

Many of you are starting to hold services, planning outdoor meetings and summer fundraisers. Look out for the **Summer of Hope** ideas and materials. Please prayerfully and financially support our new initiative to provide clergy packs for all clergy in the diocese. This will be a great opportunity to raise the profile of MU and support our clergy.

Mary Sumner day provides an opportunity to celebrate 100 years since the death of our inspirational founder. We hope to launch the clergy packs then.

Look out for the excellent policy materials in support of countering **Modern day slavery and Domestic violence**. Perhaps think of a bigger event using the **16 days of activism** materials. Nicky Vaughan, our trustee leading on policy, is always happy to advise 01788 510213

As you enjoy those treasured times to meet up with family and friends after current restrictions, don't forget to send Helen Lynett photos for the fun photo competition. See details in the recent edition of "Communicate"

Keep sharing FAITH, FUN and FELLOWSHIP

Blessings to all members and your families Jill Cannings