

## THE UPPER ALDE BENEFICE

### The Seventh Sunday of Easter

Here is a story which you will not find in any of the Gospels.

When Jesus arrived at the gates of heaven after his Ascension, the angels were waiting to welcome him. Gabriel stepped forward and said: "Lord, we've so admired everything you did down there. You revealed the Kingdom of God; you healed the sick; you showed compassion to everyone in need; you suffered so much.... But we have been wondering: whose going to keep your wonderful work going?" Jesus replied, "I've given that job to my eleven followers, and to whoever joins them." There was heard to be shuffling and coughing among the angels. Finally Gabriel, looking very troubled, spoke again, "Lord, do you really mean Peter who is useless under pressure; James and John who are so obsessed with status; Thomas who is so sceptical; and Philip who is so slow? None of them are reliable, well educated, or well connected..." "Yes," replied Jesus, "I've given them the job." "Lord, is this wise? They are bound to make a mess of it. At least consider having a plan B!" "No," said Jesus firmly. "There's no plan B."

It's St Teresa, addressing the ascended Lord, who puts it perfectly. "You have no body on earth but ours; no hands but ours; no feet but ours. Ours are the eyes showing your compassion to the world; ours are the feet with which to go about doing good; ours are the hands with which you are now to bless the world."

Last Thursday we celebrated the Ascension of our Lord. This is one of the major festivals of the Church and in the modern calendar we are encouraged to keep it on this Sunday following. Fortunately, unlike other major festivals, there are no distractions like bunnies and chocolate eggs or all the paraphernalia of Christmas. It reveals the full extent of God's reckless plan to give his love bodily form in this world. He did it perfectly and at great cost in Jesus; but even more recklessly - and certainly less perfectly - he does so in those who try to follow Jesus.

It's mostly in those down-to-earth moments when we are his body on earth. The conversations at the school gates, walking the dog, and bumping into people in the shops or the Post Office. These moments are important because they are when people see us as we are. These encounters will, perhaps, become even more important as the events of lockdown become eased. It is not just when we talk openly about Jesus - or get the vicar to do so - that people encounter the Good News.

### Prayer

Risen, ascended Lord,  
as we rejoice at your triumph,  
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,  
that all who are estranged by sin  
may find forgiveness and know your peace,  
to the glory of God the Father.

A little boy wanted £100 badly and prayed for one week but nothing happened. Then he decided to write God a letter requesting £100. When the postal authorities received the letter addressed to GOD UK, they decided to send it to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister was so impressed, touched, and amused that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a £5 note. The Prime Minister thought this would appear a lot of money to the little boy.

The boy was delighted with the £5 and sat down to write a thankyou note to God, which read:

*Dear God,*

*Thankyou very much for sending me the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you had to send it through 10, Downing Street and, as usual, they took most of it.*