

The View

29 JUNE 2020

EDITION 10

Lord, what about him?

A reflection from Rt Revd Peter Hill

Comparison in Christian ministry is frequently a problem. We can so easily compare ourselves to a colleague whose giftings make us feel inadequate; or conversely, we glance over the fence and wonder why that colleague doesn't do ministry the same way as we do. Both tend to be big mistakes in the Kingdom of God.

We have just commemorated Pentecost, and the apostle Peter's story at the end of John's Gospel is instructive when we so easily fall into that trap of futile comparison. The Risen Jesus has taken him aside on the beach in Galilee, forgives and restores him to leadership after his denial back in Jerusalem and speaks of his future. Typical of the impetuous Peter, he turns to see 'the other disciple' following them and asks, '*Lord, what about him?*' Jesus answered, '*If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? Follow me.*' (John 21:20-22).

Our Risen Lord has no time for comparisons. Each of us bears a unique gifting, a singular calling to minister in specific contexts, which will always differ somewhat from our peers and colleagues around us.



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Lord, what about him? (continued)

Our discipleship is to obediently follow our Lord where he has put us and with the ministry toolbox he has given us, without always looking over our shoulder at others seeming achievements or own lack. In God's church there are no favourites and only he knows where we are best placed.

As we at last begin to emerge from lockdown and our church buildings gradually open, it is essential that we avoid comparison of ministries and actions both from within lockdown and as we emerge into mission in the new normal. We need to trust God and one another to see and discern what and how God is calling us on in our own context, without envy, regret, or unwarranted critique. This is especially the case over the timings of building re-opening and numbers admitted currently.

In certain respects, the logistics of lockdown were straightforward. Back in March the Government guidelines were clear: *Stay Home, Protect the NHS, Save Lives*. But emergence is proving to be far more difficult to manage. Our Government's guidelines are now of necessity more permissive, leaving the detail of final decisions to local leaders: no two church contexts, buildings, capacities and personnel are the same. Please do take local responsibility for those decisions prayerfully and wisely, in accordance with those permissive guidelines, without being hampered by false comparisons.

Finally, last weekend we should have been celebrating the ordination of 30 new priests for the Church of God in Chelmsford Diocese. Regrettably, that was not possible, and we have postponed those priestings until September. I want to thank those 30 ordinands for their patience and understanding as they have to wait a little longer before receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the authority of the Church for that priestly ministry to which God has called them. I know Bishops Roger and John join me in looking forward to celebrating with you and your parishes in three months' time. As you continue to prepare for all that lies ahead, remember Peter on the beach with Jesus and be determined to follow your own calling and no one else's.

+ Peter

SUGGESTIONS:

To read and ponder:

John 21: 15 -end

To watch and reflect on:

The courageous and dignified Mina Smallman, grieving mother, previous Archdeacon of Southend and our friend on her further agony on hearing that two police officers had taken photos with her daughters' dead bodies. Our prayers continue for Mina and Chris.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-53200019/wembley-park-murders-emotional-interview-with-mum-of-sisters-found-dead>

An invitation

To join Bishop Stephen as he is legally confirmed as Archbishop of York in York Minster:

<https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/news-events/news/view-the-confirmation-of-election-of-bishop-stephen-as-the-98th-archbishop-of-york-thursday-9th-july-at-1100am/>

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Serving our Communities- St Mary's Church, Leyton

St Mary's is a church plant, linked with the Hackney Church Group in the Diocese of London and is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford's mission to plant 101 new Christian communities over the next ten years.

During the Coronavirus pandemic, the demand for food parcels has risen eight-fold in the local area, prompting the church to open its own foodbank and the second for the church group.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Hackney Church group were distributing parcels with enough food to provide 1,000 meals a week. This figure has risen to between 8,000 and 9,000 meals a week after the St Mary's foodbank was opened.



The church receives referrals from a number of agencies and works in partnership with the 'Love Your Neighbour' Campaign, the Hackney Food Bank, the Trussell Trust – which uses it as a distribution point - and with Waltham Forest Council.

Around 80 volunteers including congregation members work to deliver food parcels to people shielding or unable to leave their homes.

News and Information

Vacancy in See consultation- last chance to have your say

Thank you to everyone who has organised consultation activity to support the diocesan Vacancy in See consultation. More than 700 people, groups and churches have taken part so far. The consultation closes this coming Saturday. If you are yet to submit a response, you can do so using the links below:

[Have your say online](#)

[Have your say by post](#)

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Vacancy in See, Public Meeting by Zoom, Wednesday at 7.30pm

A reminder that the public meeting with the Appointment Secretary for the Prime Minister and the Appointment Secretary for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York will take place this Wednesday at 7.30pm on Zoom. You can sign up to register below:

[Register for Public Meeting.](#)

Church Online Survey

As we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, we want to support churches in their continued use of digital technology, harnessing and building on the fantastic work and innovation that we have seen in parishes across the diocese. Please take part in our online survey and share your own experiences and thoughts on how we can support you in the future.

[Complete Online Church Survey.](#)

Faith at Home- Thank you to Church Leaders

A group of Bishops have produced a short video thanking church leaders for the incredible work they have been doing, particularly during recent months.

[Watch the video](#)

Leading Worship with Confidence Resources

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Leading Worship with Confidence Online and Offline workshop this weekend. Videos and resources from the workshop can be accessed by [clicking here.](#)