

Message from Bishop Rachel

30 April 2024



‘..You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’

(Acts 1:8 Words spoken by Jesus before his ascension)

Very soon we will be living a Big Mission weekend of evangelism across the Diocese (May 24-26). The Archbishop of Canterbury will be with us and he will be engaging with some events in different contexts which build on existing relationships and further encourage people to inhabit our vision of [LIFE Together](#) with ever greater confidence, as we live and name the transforming love and hope of Jesus Christ amid people’s personal stories, including ours.

[The Archbishop’s programme can be read by clicking this link.](#)

The hope is that followers of Jesus Christ will be encouraged to be more confident in their faith and witness, and that there will be fresh opportunities and space for those who have not yet encountered Christ to do so.

It has been encouraging to hear of those who are creating spaces and events that weekend to share and speak of the love and hope of Jesus Christ in a place of relationship. There are also a few members of the College of Evangelists coming to be with us, and they are spending the weekend with specific parishes focusing on particular issues such as the environment, older people, sport etc.

The weekend will close with a celebration diocesan Eucharist (Holy Communion) in the Cathedral on Sunday 26 May at 3pm. We would be grateful if you could share with us if you plan to attend. [Please click here.](#) This will be the opportunity for the diocesan family of all ages to be together with Archbishop Justin to give thanks for the weekend and to look forward to how we go on growing in our witness to Christ as we join in ever more deeply with God’s transforming work among the people and places of our daily lives and contexts.

Of course, at the heart of all this is prayer. It is not our strivings or initiatives which bring people to Jesus Christ, but the work of the Holy Spirit. As we look ahead to this special bank holiday weekend, it is my hope that we will go on learning more about prayer.

Some people will already be familiar with [‘Thy Kingdom Come’](#) which is a worldwide ecumenical movement which invites Christians of all ages around the world to pray from Ascension (9 May) to Pentecost (19 May) for more people to come to know Jesus Christ.

It is my hope and prayer that in this diocese, across our diverse contexts and liturgical traditions, we will commit to pray and be ever more expectant for people of all ages and backgrounds to encounter Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are a range of resources within the [material produced for TKC.](#)

Not all of them will appeal to everyone, but the intention is that you will find what encourages and challenges you to pray (both as an individual and collectively as a worshipping community).

There are a 1,000 free copies of the Novena and the Prayer Diary. Details about these and how to claim them can be [found here](#). Someone will need to come and collect from the Bishops' Office.

If you are encouraging prayer in different ways and at particular times in your particular context, please do share the stories with Katherine Clamp on ku.gro.coidsolg@pmalck as it is good to encourage one another and to be connected.

I finish with our LIFE prayer which we have been praying together since 2016:

God of hope and transformation,
who in our Lord Jesus Christ
offers the gift of life in all its fullness,
send your Holy Spirit and grant us
joy in our following and vision in our *leadership*.
May we be rich in *imagination*,
confident in *faith*,
and courageous in our *engagement* with
the people and places of this diocese.
As we share your life with the world,
keep us rooted and grounded in love
as we bear witness to your glory
and pray for your Kingdom to come. Amen.

"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities." Archbishop Justin

With my thanks and prayers as ever.