



Benefice News

The South Dales Benefice

September 2023

The Spirit of St. Francis

Over the past few months I have spent quite a lot of time in hospital waiting rooms and doctors' surgeries. Sometimes I have picked up things to read to pass the time, one of these was a magazine which had excerpts and reviews of several recent books from various Christian denominations. One that jumped out at me was from an anthology of some of Pope Francis's addresses during his first year as Pope.

The news has been full of stories of disastrous wild fires, climate change disasters, famine, starvation, heart rending stories of families in some third world countries who cannot feed their children, vast areas of land laid waste due to pollution, man-made disasters and exploitation.

I would like to share with you this simple message, an extract from the book which speaks volumes and which we should try to live by.

If we destroy creation, Creation will destroy us

"Creation is not some possession that we can lord it over for our pleasure ; nor, even less, is it the property of only some people, the few: creation is a gift, it is a marvellous gift that God has given us, so that we will take care of it and harness it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude... We must

protect creation for it is a gift which the Lord has given us, it is God's present to us; we are the guardians of creation. When we exploit creation, we destroy that sign of God's love. To destroy creation is to say to God: "I don't care." And this is not good: this is sin. Custody of creation is precisely custody of God's gift and it is saying to God: "thank you, I am the guardian of creation so as to make it progress, never to destroy your gift." This must be our attitude to creation: guard it for if we destroy creation, creation will destroy us!"

"The Spirit of St Francis: Inspiring words on faith, love and creation". SPCK

I haven't yet got round to finding the book itself, but it is on my future reading list.

Marlene Weston

Our virtual services can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/South-Dales-Benefice-102041281452944>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13426/>

Our YouTube Livestreaming Channel

https://youtube.com/channel/UCqcfG84wZzSJCXzfr2q_ygh

THE LECTIONARY IN SEPTEMBER

Sunday 10th TRINITY 14

Ezekiel 33:7-11; Psalm 119: 33-40; Romans 13: 8-14; Matthew 18: 15-20

Sunday 17th TRINITY 15

Genesis 50: 15-21; Psalm 103: 1-13; Romans 14: 1-12; Matthew 18: 21-35

Sunday 24th TRINITY 16

Jonah 3: 10-4:11; Psalm 145, 1-8; Philippians 1: 21-30; Matthew 20: 1-16

OUR SERVICES

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sunday 3rd

Trinity 13

**10.30am, UNITED BENEFICE EUCHARIST @
SCROPTON**

Thursday 7th

The BVM

**12.30am, DAILY PRAYER FOR THE NATIVITY OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY @
SOMERSAL (L)**

7.30pm, COME TO THE QUIET @ SOMERSAL (L)

Sunday 10th

Trinity 14

9.30am, EUCHARIST @ ALKMONTON

11am, FAMILY SERVICE @ CUBLEY

11am, EUCHARIST @ DOVERIDGE

**11am, PARISH HARVEST @ MARSTON
MONTGOMERY**

9.30am, MORNING PRAYER @ SCROPTON

6pm, EVENING PRAYER @ SOMERSAL HERBERT

11am, FAMILY SERVICE @ SUDBURY

Sunday 17th

Trinity 15

6pm, PARISH HARVEST @ ALKMONTON

11am, EUCHARIST @ CUBLEY

11am, PARISH HARVEST @ DOVERIDGE

11am, MORNING PRAYER @ MARSTON

11am, MORNING PRAYER @ SUDBURY (L)

Sunday 24th

Trinity 16

9.30am, MORNING PRAYER @ ALKMONTON

6pm, EVENING PRAYER @ CUBLEY

**11am, DISABILITY SUNDAY SERVICE @
DOVERIDGE**

**11am, MORNING PRAYER @ MARSTON
MONTGOMERY**

9.30am, HARVEST SERVICE @ SCROPTON

**9.30am, HARVEST EUCHARIST @ SOMERSAL
HERBERT (L)**

11am, EUCHARIST @ SUDBURY

OCTOBER 2023

Sunday 1st
The Holy Angels

**10.30am, UNITED BENEFICE EUCHARIST @
DOVERIDGE**

Thursday 5th

7.30pm, COME TO THE QUIET @ SOMERSAL (L)

Sunday 8th
Trinity 18

9.30am, EUCHARIST @ ALKMONTON
11am, HARVEST & HOLY BAPTISM @ CUBLEY
11am, EUCHARIST @ DOVERIDGE
11am, MORNING PRAYER @ MARSTON
MONTGOMERY
9.30am, MORNING PRAYER @ SCROPTON
6pm, EVENING PRAYER @ SOMERSAL HERBERT
11am, FAMILY SERVICE @SUDBURY

Saturday 14th
Sunday 15th
Trinity 19

6pm, VILLAGE PRAISE @ ALKMONTON
11am, EUCHARIST @ CUBLEY
11am, FAMILY SERVICE @ DOVERIDGE
11am, EUCHARIST @ MARSTON MONTGOMERY
11am, MORNING PRAYER @ SUDBURY (L)

Thursday 19th

**10am, BENEFICE MORNING PRAYER & COFFEE
TIME @ SOMERSAL HERBERT**

Sunday 22nd
Trinity 20

9.30am, FAMILY SERVICE @ ALKMONTON
6pm, EVENING PRAYER @ CUBLEY
11am, MORNING PRAYER @ DOVERIDGE
11am, FAMILY SERVICE & HOLY BAPTISM @
MARSTON MONTGOMERY
9.30am, EUCHARIST @ SCROPTON
9.30am, EUCHARIST @ SOMERSAL
HERBERT (L)
11am, EUCHARIST @ SUDBURY

Sunday 29th

FIFTH SUNDAY EVENTS IN THE PARISHES
11am, MORNING PRAYER & HOLY BAPTISM @
DOVERIDGE

September - the month of the Holy Cross

Almighty God,
who in the passion of your blessed Son
made an instrument of painful death
to be for us the means of life:
grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ
that we may gladly suffer for his sake;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.
Amen

Communications

**Requests for Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals or
Interment of Ashes to:**

The Rector Revd Dr John Vickerstaff

Email: drjohn.vickerstaff@gmail.com

Mobile: 07565 825250

INPUT FOR:

Benefice News, A Church Near You, & Benefice

Facebook Page: drjohn.vickerstaff@gmail.com or
thesouthdalesparishes@gmail.com

Doveridge Parish Magazine:

Jane Sedrak: janeshouksmith@hotmail.com

(articles in .doc, .jpg and .pdf formats)

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Parish News

SUDBURY

- We are busy raising funds for the repair to the Church Roof and it appears that we will need to raise approximately £20,000 to help with the repairs. The lead will not be replaced and where it remains will be removed on the North Aisle. The lead above the Choir and Vernon Chapel will be replaced where damaged to comply with the Church's Grade 2 listing. If you are able to support funding, please donate via the following link.



To kick start the major fund-raising campaign a concert will be held on Saturday the 21st October at 7:30pm. **The Rhapsody Community Choir** will be performing songs from the shows, films and hit records you're your favourite pop, There will be a raffle and refreshments. All this for a ticket price of

£10 for what is promised to be an entertaining evening. Tickets are available from Alan Smith or any PCC member.

- **Hand Bell Ringing practice** takes place at the Church on the second and fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30. No experience necessary.
- A harvest Supper will take place at the **Secret Diner HMP Sudbury** on the 2nd of October starting at 7:00pm sharp. This will comprise a two course supper inclusive of tea and coffee. Please bring your own soft drinks, alcohol is strictly forbidden. There will be a quiz and a fun raffle with an opportunity to win a large cash prize. Tickets are priced at £10-00 and available from any of the PCC or from myself.

SOMERSAL HERBERT

- **COME TO THE QUIET:** Our monthly service of healing and renewal is looking for an **ASSISTANT(S)** who will help us deliver worship in person and online on the first Thursday of each month. Duties will include: setting up the church for the service; starting and operating the livestream from the tech desk. If anyone can help please get in touch with Revd Dr John Vickerstaff On 07565825250.
- The Church of St Peter & St Blaise (StP&B) will be celebrating **THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY on Thursday 7th September 2023.** There will be short, livestreamed, service of DAILY PRAYER at 12.30pm, and a

celebration of the Eucharist (at Come to the Quiet) at 7.30pm. All are welcome in person or online.

https://youtube.com/channel/UCqcfSG84wZzSJCXzfr2q_ygh

DOVERIDGE

- The Benefice will be marking **DISABILITY SUNDAY** on 24th September 2023 with a special service at St Cuthbert's, Doveridge, starting at 11am. The CEO of **Through the Roof** will speak on 'Wheelchairs for the World'.

Benefice Notice

CONFIRMATION

In September we are starting Confirmation Groups throughout the benefice - one for adults and one for youngsters. There is still time to join up - in time for the Service of Baptism & Confirmation in late November which will be presided over by Bishop Malcolm. If you want to know more about the Christian faith this website will provide useful information: <https://www.churchofengland.org/> - LifeEvents – Confirmations. If you wish to enquire further please contact the Revd Jane Legh at jane.legh@cubleylodge.com or 1335 330297 or Revd Peter Jones at rev.jon@talktalk.net or 01889565123 or Revd Dr John Vickerstaff at drjohn.vickerstaff@gmail.com or 07565825250.

HARVEST SUPPERS

Alkmonton on Monday 18th September at 7pm in the Mary Clowes Hall. Tickets are £10 for adults and £5 for children under 12.

Marston Montgomery on Friday 15th September at 7pm in the Village Hall. Tickets are £10 for adults, £5 for children available from Mark Foley Markafol@gamil.com

Scropton on Monday 25th September at 7pm for 7.30pm at the Boar's Head, Sudbury. Tickets are £15.50 for main course and pudding.

Cubley on Monday 9th October at 7.30pm at the Mary Clowes Hall.

There is a licensed bar so no bring your own. Auction of produce.

Doveridge on Monday 18th September at 6.45pm in the Club. Tickets are £9 per head available from Trudy Jones (01889 565123), or Phil Slack (01889 543190)

From the Registers

FUNERALS

Irene Bunting @ St Cuthbert's, Doveridge,
on Tuesday 19th September 2023

Rest Eternal grant unto her, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon her. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Thoughts on the Feast of S. Gregory the Great

(Sunday 3rd September 2023)

The greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves (Lk 22:26)

These familiar words are taken from the account of the Last Supper in St. Luke's Gospel. They are an appropriate choice for the feast of St. Gregory, who described himself as *Servus servorum Dei* - the Servant of the servants of God. That little formula has stuck to the Papacy ever since, and is still perhaps its most illustrious title and greatest honour. Gregory reminds us that one vital form of service in the Church is leadership; that authority is perfectly compatible with gentleness and humility; that strength of character is a virtue, not a vice: but also that as Christians we are always called to ever closer conformity with our crucified Master. It is at the Holy Eucharist where we encounter Jesus Christ our Lord precisely in his humility; Jesus who laid down his life for

us, who bowed down low in order to serve us; Jesus our Lord, our King, our God, who comes to us still in lowly form to feed us, and to raise us up.

St. Gregory the Great was an aristocrat, born to rule; a wealthy landowner; a statesman; a Roman of the Romans; a loyal subject of the Roman Empire, and of the Emperor whose seat was in Constantinople. But first and foremost he was a Christian, a man of God, a contemplative, a mystic: outstanding for his knowledge and love of holy scripture, for his humility, for his prayer. Later ages conferred on him the title of Doctor of the Church. Gregory is not a doctor of theology though, in the way that a St. Augustine or a St. Thomas Aquinas are. Rather he is a teacher of the moral life: of how to live in this world while turned all the while towards God, longing for the eternal union with him which is our destiny, and which alone gives meaning and value to all we do. St. Gregory is known especially as a Doctor of desire: desire for God, and for heaven.

We know the main outlines of St. Gregory's career. By the time of his birth in the mid 6th century, the Roman Empire of the West had already fallen, and been carved up among the many barbarian nations. Italy, or most of it anyway, had been reconquered under Eastern Emperor Justinian, but by the time of Gregory's maturity, the hold of the Empire on Italy was uncertain at best, and under great pressure from new invasions. As a young man Gregory had already held high political office in Rome. Ordained a deacon, he was sent by the Pope to be his representative at the court in Constantinople. It was there that he preached to his monastic companions his massive commentary on the book of Job.

Absolutely against his will, Gregory was elected Bishop of Rome in the year 590 and immediately he found himself amid ecclesiastical, civil, economic, political and military chaos. Barbarian war lords were freely roaming about Italy, looting, burning, raping, torturing, murdering. Destitute and starving refugees were flooding into the city. The only coherent institution left in the country was the Catholic Church. So this lover of solitude and seclusion, this man of fragile health who only wanted to be a monk, this peaceful man of interior life and study found himself acting perforce as father of his people. No one else in the country was capable of exercising any control, and so he took over. We are fortunate to possess over 850 of the letters Gregory wrote during his Pontificate. They reveal a man of astonishing energy; a supremely competent and hands-on administrator, a man of the most

upright rectitude, who was also well able to deal prudently with the most diverse and complex situations. Gregory's first preoccupation as Pope was to secure a food supply for the population. Then to organise defence, while negotiating with the enemy. Then to manage flood relief. Then to buy back kidnapped prisoners. Then to appeal to the Emperor against unjust and impossible taxes and levies. Then to administer civil justice. Then to re-organise devastated monasteries and Churches, and to counter heresies, and to encourage and recruit good pastors. Then to evangelise the English.

And all this time Gregory was also preaching God's word, in season and out. Many, though certainly not all, of his homilies and scripture commentaries from this period have come down to us. And we trace through all that he writes his own experience of physical pain, of bodily weakness, of crushing sorrow and loss, and also his intense awareness of the malice of sin. So Gregory loves to point us beyond this present age, this valley of tears, this realm of death and distress - to kindle our longing for our heavenly homeland, where God is, to which we are called, and where our dignity in Christ will find its fulfilment and achievement.

In the modern age this whole way of looking at life has been to a great extent set aside, and even rejected, even within the Church. It needs to be recovered, because it's an open-eyed reflection on the truth of the human condition, while offering also a securely rooted understanding of human greatness, and human possibility, within God's Kingdom.

One of the constant themes in all Gregory's writings is the value of preaching, and the duty of preachers. Gregory had a very high view of the episcopal office, and of the power bishops are given to preach God's saving word to the people. So he deploys his harshest invective against the unworthy pastors of his time. Wherever his own authority extended, he did not hesitate to discipline them, to demand explanations of their conduct from them, to depose them when necessary, and even to excommunicate them. Some of his most ferocious comments are reserved for bishops who were guilty of the sin of silence. That is, they allowed grave disorders to go on within their jurisdiction, and they said nothing, did nothing, about it. They wanted to avoid trouble. They wanted to retain good relations with those in power, however corrupt and evil they might be. They wanted to be comfortable and secure. And so their preaching was filled with pleasing platitudes, but on matters of pressing importance, which it

was their God-given duty to address, they said nothing.

Some of this sounds depressingly familiar to us today. Gregory never mentions the sexual abuse of minors, but in fact the problem of his day and of ours is the same: it's worldliness. When we have bishops who are essentially worldly, we have a big problem. They are not true shepherds at all, but wolves in sheep's clothing, and they bring disgrace to us all. Today then we ask that, through the example and intercession of St. Gregory the Great, new, courageous and faithful pastors may be raised up to shepherd God's holy people. We pray that our pastors may be given a spirit of wisdom, so that God's word may be proclaimed again in our day, in all its beauty and power of conviction, for the renewal of the Church, and for the glory of God.

Author Anonymous