



Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney's Lent Course 2024

# THE WAY TO THE CROSS

FRIDAY 26 APRIL



## PERSONAL REFLECTION - FAITH, HOPE, & TRUST IN THE LOVE OF GOD

*The personal reflection for this week comes from Dr Nicola Mills who is a member of the Provincial Vocations Team.*

Last year at a meeting in Perth, three people who had put themselves forward to be considered for training for ordination were interviewed, prayed with, chatted with and laughed with, and accepted for training. It was a major step – not the first, and not the last, but a big one – in their journey of discernment, in the recognition of their vocation. I hope they would not mind me saying, that on one level at least, there was nothing out of the ordinary about these three people.

None had a dazzling intellect, nor striking good looks, nor a bank balance to make the eyes water. Yet at the same time they were three extraordinary people: God had given them a purpose, and they were following the path that God had set them.

Sometimes people come into this process bouncing with enthusiasm, ready to talk to anyone about what God has told them to do. Sometimes they slide in reluctantly, not at all sure they have heard God right: sometimes they want to be told they have, and that God has a purpose for them, and sometimes they want to be told it was all a mistake and they can go away and lead ordinary lives.

## Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

O God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do your will, and work in us that which is well-pleasing in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Anglicans, or Episcopalians, the saying goes, are like Arctic rivers, frozen at the mouth: sometimes it's hard to get our reluctant enquirers to talk at all about what God has said to them. But when they start to put those words together, and they start to talk about what they feel and fear and long for – my word, it is joy-bringing!

Sometimes it has been a niggler in the back of their minds for years, growing gradually stronger. Sometimes it has been some event, or something someone has said to them, that has made them think 'What, me?' Sometimes it has been as shocking as a clap on the shoulder from a stranger, a flash of light. One man told me it was a sudden silence in the midst of noise. God had chosen His way, and spoken to each of them.

Is that extraordinary, or not? Should it be extraordinary? God has given every one of us a purpose. Sometimes He feels the need to shout at us about it. But do we all follow His path?

Our purposes are all different, of course. You'll remember that bit from the epistle to the Romans: We have many parts in the one body, and all these parts have different functions: Paul talks about the hands and the eyes and the feet all working together for the purposes of God.

You could say that God does not need us to use our talents. After all, He can do pretty much everything without us. But God has made and knows every bit of us – we are fearfully and wonderfully made – and why would he waste time working on us in this way if he did not want us to do something with all that work? He has given us such potential. All we have to do is fulfil it.

Are we good enough to carry it out? We maybe think we aren't, but remember that none of us is perfect, and God wants us to serve Him anyway, to the best of our ability.

Is God calling you to do something? Yes. It might be small, or huge, or somewhere in between. Does it seem impossible? There's a well-known saying: "There are three stages to every great work of God; first it is impossible, then it is difficult, then it is done".

Remember that all things are possible with God – and that whatever He asks us to do, He will also give us the strength to carry it out. But remember, too, that once you see that purpose, once you set a foot on that path, anything could happen. As Bilbo Baggins says, It's a dangerous business, going out your door. You step on to the road, and if you don't keep your feet, there's no knowing where you might be swept off to. So make a start. Remember, God bought us for a price – he has already set a value on us. All we have to do is turn up and do our best. God is working his purpose out, and we are part of it.



Jesus said,  
“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ”

*John 10.11*

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## *Usual Weekly Pattern*

Sunday  
RCL Eucharist  
Readings and Collect

Monday  
Delving Deeper into  
the Readings

Tuesday  
Words from Others  
(sacred & secular)

Wednesday  
Resources from the  
Arts

Thursday  
Contemplative Acts

Friday  
Personal Reflection  
– what this means to  
me

Saturday  
Acts & Deeds