

Homily - BCP Holy Communion (3rd May 2020)

John 10.1-10 “I came to give life—life in all its fullness.”

I've been pondering on what a 'life in all its fullness' looks like.

I have a pretty full life: my role as your Vicar/Pastor and Priest is quite full on.

I have said to vicar colleagues - I am surprised how 40 people can keep me busy all week (that's the total Sunday congregation number across our four churches, typically) on a Sunday. Then comes a Pandemic and I am regularly engaging with over 70 of you! And other people too, across these villages. I also try to be a good husband, father, brother, son and friend. Sometimes I even do some housework. I enjoy dusting but I am no good at cooking.

How do we spend our time?

How did we spend our time before lockdown?

I did an exercise once with pupils in one of my former schools – the pupils looked at how they filled our time. If a day is split between 24 segments of a pie chart, what goes in them? I did that exercise in the last week - this is what it looks

like for me.. (SHOW) Have a go, add it up. I get to about 22 and then get a bit stuck. I have a gap of about two hours I can just never seem to fill. Where do those two hours every day go? How could I or do I spend those two hours?

In doing this exercise, I realized I had quickly jumped from a full life to a busy one. I don't think that is what Jesus meant in the Gospel account this morning.

He didn't come to bring us a life **full** of work, phone calls, writing and creating stuff for the website and meetings by Zoom, a life centred around rota planning, rural mission : a life juggling between ministry in its widest and around home school lessons, jostling for the last click and collect supermarket slot and ordering stuff on line **That's just busyness.**

While all of those different parts of life are important, what comes next?

What does a life filled by Jesus really mean?

The earlier part of the reading from John 10, and the Psalm that I am using a fair bit at the moment in our funeral ministry – Psalm 23 – lead me to ask what does it mean to be the sheep of the Good Shepherd?

The Good Shepherd is the gate to the pen, who protects his sheep by night and guides them through the valley of the shadow of death to the green pastures, to the calm waters. You know that as well as I do. I often preach that at funerals.

The Good Shepherd is the one who calls each one by name and whose voice is known.

Perhaps this is also what life in all its fullness means: to understand when to let things go and be fully guided, even through the darkest and most uncertain of times.

I haven't heard God's voice audibly, but I've felt God's presence or believed I've known God's presence – usually by a kick in the stomach.

I've heard my calling, and I've been led in the footsteps, guided in the good times and the bad, and protected in the fold of his making, by my family, church and friends.

I hope and pray that you know Jesus the Good Shepherd who calls you by name, leads you to pastures of peace and enfolds you in love – the one who has come to give you life, and life in all its fullness. AMEN