

Notes from the office of the Area Bishop of Ripon

Welcome to the first fortnightly update from the desk of Bishop Helen-Ann! Please feel free to print and display on your notice-board. Remember to check out the Diocese of Leeds' website for news and events and resources www.leeds.anglican.org ; Bishop Helen-Ann is also on twitter @h_ahartley and Instagram @bishophelenann; Bishop Helen-Ann blogs occasionally at bishophelenann@wordpress.com . The Diocesan Twitter feed may be found at @LeedsCofE; The Diocesan Bishop of Leeds, Bishop Nick is @nickbaines (Twitter), and his blog is nickbaines.wordpress.com .

Please remember the Diocesan Prayer Cycle which may be found at <http://www.leeds.anglican.org/content/prayer-diary> it includes the Anglican Communion Cycle of Prayer, as well as praying for the people, parishes and places of the Diocese of Leeds.

Bishop Helen-Ann is incredibly grateful for the welcome and support that she has been given since she took up her appointment. She will continue to get to know the Area, and its people, and the wider Diocese over the coming months, working with the Ripon Area Staff to forge the vision for the Area as part of the Diocese of Leeds in this new season. Thanks be to God!

Bishop Helen-Ann's Diary (March 5th to March 18th)

Monday 5 th	Clergy visits;
Tuesday 6 th	Regular catch-up with Archdeacon Beverley; meeting with Vice-Chancellor of York St John University (afternoon);
Wednesday 7 th	Individual meetings with Area Deans at Redwood during the day; hosting a dinner for Area Deans at Redwood (evening)
Thursday 8 th	Leading workshops at Harrogate Ladies' College as part of their 'Inspirational Women's Day';
Friday 9 th	Day off;
Saturday 10 th	Meet Harrogate Deanery Confirmation candidates; talk on 'Seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit';
Sunday 11 th	Confirmation – Benefice of the Lower Swale, Ainderby Steeple;
Monday 12 th	Clergy visits;
Tuesday 13 th	Bishop's (Bishop Nick) Staff Residential (Ripon Spa Hotel, Ripon);
Wednesday 14 th	Bishop's Staff Residential (Ripon Spa Hotel, Ripon);
Thursday 15 th	Bishop's Staff Residential (Ripon Spa Hotel, Ripon);
Friday 16 th	Attend the Senior Leaders' Conference – Education (Leeds);
Saturday 17 th	Diocesan Synod (Leeds);
Sunday 18 th	Confirmation - Giggleswick School (morning); attend Wilfred Owen service at Ripon Cathedral (Evensong);

Sunday Gospel thoughts

4th Sunday in Lent (Mothering Sunday) March 11th Luke 2.33-35

In just a few verses, Luke gives us an insight into the whole of the Gospel story. Simeon has just praised God because of what he has seen in the infant Jesus, so much so that Mary and Joseph are amazed. Simeon then blesses the holy family, and specifically addresses to Mary the promise that Jesus will cause great upheaval to Israel, and that she will suffer because of what will happen to him. The sword that will pierce Mary is one of judgement as well as suffering because through Jesus everything is reframed, forcing those around him (and us) to

re-evaluate all our lives. If we live in, for and with God, we must be prepared for struggle and challenge. Through that of course comes new life, and that life is made manifest in Easter glory.

On this Mothering Sunday, what are we thankful for? What do we lament? God holds all our joys and sorrows, as we seek refreshment in him this day.

5th Sunday in Lent March 18th John 12.20-33

John's Gospel continually invites us to delve deeper into who Jesus is. Whenever we read words that relate to seeing or sight, we know immediately that there is much more to it than simply describing what is in front of us. Some Greek-speaking Jews come to Philip (who has a Greek name) and say: 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip goes and tells Andrew (another Greek name), and they both go and tell Jesus. You can almost picture the energy and movement bound up in these few words! What is significant here, is that (as one commentator) points out, from now on Jesus' crucifixion is seen in the light of his resurrection and future glory. As we journey closer to the cross, we also journey closer to what lies beyond it. Even though Jesus is troubled, a key feature of John's portrayal is that Jesus accepts his fate without hesitation. Perhaps even there is an allusion to the Lord's Prayer, as Jesus asks for his Father's name to be glorified? We are also taken to the narratives of Jesus' Baptism and his transfiguration, with the voice from heaven (thunder in the Old Testament is often taken to represent God's voice).

In our lives, who has shown us Jesus? Recall and give thanks for the witness and encouragement of others. May we be encouragers to one another.

The Ripon Episcopal Area office is still under construction (literally!). We hope that it will be ready by the end of this month

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