

## Pastoral letter 25<sup>th</sup> March

Dear friends,

I managed to do a little bit of gardening in the Rectory a few days ago. As I was turning over the soil in the small but perfectly formed vegetable patch, with my friend the robin following me as I went, out of the corner of my eye I saw a white flash way across the other side of the paddock, that lays behind the garden. I stopped digging and looked out across the field. There it was again, another flash of white colour. I couldn't hear anything but something was definitely there. As I put the spade down it made a small thudding sound and with that I saw a pair of ears pop up, attached to the head of a field rabbit. The rabbit was now on guard, it's ears pricked, watching all around it, it was motionless and yet at the same time active, active in not just listening, but sensing and hearing what was around it.

I decided it was time for a break from the gardening and have a cup of tea. As I sat looking out at the rabbit foraging in the paddock field I couldn't hear it at all, but every time I made the slightest of noises it stopped suddenly and looked around it. It got me thinking about how we not only listen to, but also hear, not only others but also God in our lives. When we speak with someone, if we are being truthful with ourselves, we know whether they are really listening to us; in the way maybe they look at us or in the way that they are attentive to what we say, and not just possibly waiting for the moment to speak themselves.

I've been reflecting upon this as we prepare individually and together for the beginning of Holy week on Palm Sunday. How do we listen to and probably even more importantly, how do we hear God, not only in our own lives, but also through others as well as in our villages and in the natural world around us?

The person who wrote psalm 46 gives to us maybe some help in how we might hear God and encounter God in our lives, when they wrote; 'Be still and know that I am God.' But it was Jesus himself, whilst speaking to those who rejected him and wanted to find ways to kill him, who highlights how we might encounter his divine presence when he says; 'My sheep hear my voice.' John 10 v 27.

As we journey through Holy week, individually and together, whether it be in person at one of our church services, or at home maybe possibly alone or with family, one thing we might like to reflect upon is how we not only listen to but also hear God in our lives. When on the cross the criminal crucified alongside Jesus says to him; 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus replies; 'Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.' I just hope the man heard what Jesus said, and that we too hear Jesus in our lives as we journey together to celebrate the joy of hearing the life transforming words; He is risen!

Love & prayers  
Revd Neil

