

# The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

Rev Ben van Lieshout  
3 Stewarts Place  
Holywood, Co Down  
BT18 9DX  
90424254  
07974960570  
[benvl@onetel.com](mailto:benvl@onetel.com)

Newsletter for the week of Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Dear friends,

Last week the new lockdown in Northern Ireland was extended until at least the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. Most churches here are now streaming their services online.

But the regulations re. places of worship for this new period of lockdown haven't changed.

On the NI Direct website it says that you are allowed to leave your home to attend a place of worship.

Having services online is not an option for us so we have decided to continue with our services in Holywood on Thursdays and (most) Sundays.

We will carefully monitor the situation over the coming weeks but the Covid 19 rate in the North Down area is among the lowest in Northern Ireland and all over Northern Ireland the rate of infection is gradually coming down, so I feel that as long as we are very careful and keep to the regulations re face coverings and distancing we can continue with our services in Holywood.

But this applies only to services, any other meetings, study groups etc. are not allowed under the current guidelines

Everyone will need to be extra aware that if you have any kind of symptoms of cough, cold or temperature or if you have been in contact with anyone who is ill you should not come.

And of course, if you do not feel safe then there is always the option of the quieter service on Thursdays or to accompany us in spirit from your home.

The situation is different in each of the Camphill communities.

In Mourne Grange everyone received the second dose of the vaccine three weeks ago so they are now starting to relax their precautions and we will have one service for the whole community instead of celebrating the service twice for smaller groups.

Whereas Clanabogan and Ballybay are both in areas where transmission rates are still high and they have not had their vaccination yet so we have cancelled our services there until things get better.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Ben van Lieshout

## Hollywood

*For Sunday services, please ring (02890424254), text (07974960570) or email ([benvl@onetel.com](mailto:benvl@onetel.com)) to book a place as we can only seat 11-13 people.*

### **Epiphany**

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January      The Act of Consecration of Man      10.00

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January**      The Act of Consecration of Man  
Followed by the next of a series of short talks on  
The Act of Consecration of Man as a path;  
"Transsubstantiation" (part 1)

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February      The Act of Consecration of Man      10.00

## Mourne Grange (in Dawn Hall !)

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February      The Act of Consecration of Man      10.15

**The gospel for the 4<sup>th</sup> Epiphany Sunday, January 31 is: Matthew 20, 1-16**



The kingdom of the heavens is like a man, the master of his house, who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.

Agreeing to pay them one denarius a day, he sent them out into his vineyard.

At about 9 o'clock he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace, and he said to them, "Go also into my vineyard, and I will give you whatever is right."

So they went.

He went out again at about noon and at 3 o'clock and did the same. At 5 o'clock he went out and found others standing there and he said to them, "Why do you stand here all day idle?"

They said, "Because no one has hired us." He said, "You, too, go into the vineyard."

And when evening came, the master of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the workers and give them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first."

Those who had been hired at 5 o'clock came forward, and each received one denarius. Therefore, when it was the turn of those who were hired first, they expected to receive more. However, they too also received one denarius each.

They took it, but they began to grumble against the master of the house. "These men who were hired last only worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day."

However, he answered one of them, saying, "Friend, I am not being unjust to you. Did you not agree with me for one denarius? Take what you have earned and go.

I wish to give to the man hired last the same as I give to you.

Have I not the right to do as I wish with what is mine?

Or do you give me an evil look because I am generous?

Thus will the last be first and the first will one day be last. "

## A homily on Matthew 20: 1 – 16



A kingdom is a realm or a sphere. It implies a boundary or border. In today's reading Christ uses the term 'the kingdom of the heavens'. The way that He uses it, we cannot think of this kingdom of the heavens as a place in the afterlife, a place we can only enter after death. His kingdom of the heavens is a place here on the earth. It is a sort of parallel universe that happens alongside or within our earthly lives. Its boundaries are drawn by our awareness of it, our attention. It exists wherever the spiritual and the earthly are united in the here and now of the human heart.

This earthly-heavenly kingdom is a place where we are called to work, to engage our wills, in community with others. God calls each of us, wants to 'hire' anyone who is willing to work 'heartily' now, in and for this heavenly-earthly realm. God's kingdom is created by His wish, His desire that the spiritual and the earthly intersect. His reward, the day's wage, is the same for all—we receive what we need to sustain us for the day's work.

In the middle of each Act of Consecration of Man we pray, along with Christ, the words He taught us. They are the keys to the doorway to the Kingdom: May what the Father wants for the earth happen through our deeds. We can trust that we will be given daily nourishment that will sustain us for His work. With Christ, we pray to the Father:

**May your kingdom extend itself  
in our deeds and moral conduct.**

**May we so perform your will  
as you, Father, have laid it down  
in our inmost being.**

**Spiritual nourishment,  
the bread of life,  
you give us superabundantly  
in all the changing conditions  
of our lives.**

*From a contemplation of The Lord's Prayer, by Rudolf Steiner*