

# The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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## Newsletter for the week of Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July.

Dear friends,

As I am writing this newsletter we are hoping that the proposed changes to covid regulations will go through Stormont on Thursday this week.

This would mean the following:

*From 26 July, face coverings will no longer be compulsory in places of worship, subject to approval on 22 July.*

And the 1.5 – 2 m rule for social distancing in indoor spaces might be reduced to 1 m.

We are already allowed to share out communion again, I read on the NI direct website:

*“There should only be a closer distance when absolutely essential to enable a faith practice to be carried out (for example communion).”*

So it looks hopeful that in the not too distant future we will again be able to live our life as a congregation without any restrictions and that it will be left to our individual responsibility to learn to live with the virus.

Ben van Lieshout

### Hollywood

Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July (St John's)	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00

### Glencraig

No services until 26 August

### Mourne Grange

Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> July (St John's)	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.15
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### Clanabogan

Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.30
Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.30

## The gospel for Sunday 25 July is Mark 8, 27-Mark 9-1

And Jesus went on with his disciples into the region of Caesarea Philippi (in the north of the land at the source of the Jordan where the Roman Caesar was worshiped as a divine being).

And on the way there he asked the disciples, "Who do people say that I am?"

They said to him, "Some say that you are John the Baptist; others say Elijah, still others that you are one of the prophets."

Then he asked them, "And you, who do you say that I am?"

Then Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

And Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

And he began to teach them: "The Son of Man must suffer much and will be rejected by the leaders of the people, by the elders and the teachers of the law, and he will be killed and after three days he will rise again." Freely and openly he told them this.



*Alexander-Masters of Otto van Moerdrecht*

Then Peter took him aside and began to urge him not to let this happen. He, however, turned around, looked at his disciples, and reprimanded Peter, saying to him, "Withdraw from me; now the adversary is speaking through you!

Your thinking is not divine but merely human in nature."

And he called the crowd together, including his disciples and said to them, "Whoever would follow me must practice self-denial and take up his cross and follow me.

For whoever is concerned about the salvation of his own soul will lose it; but whoever gives his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel, his soul will find power and healing.

For what use is it to a human being to gain the whole world if through that he damages his soul, which falls victim to the power of an empty darkness?

What then can a man give as ransom for his soul?

In this present humanity, which denies the spirit and lives in error, whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the shining revelation of the Father among his holy angels."

And he said to them, "The truth I say to you, among those who are standing here there are some who will not taste death before they behold the kingdom of God arising in human beings, revealing itself in the power and magnificence of the spirit."

## A homily on Mark 8, 27-Mark 9-1

Once again in the course of the year, we stand before a new beginning.

In this second half of the year, we are embarking on a ten week walk toward Michaelmas.

It begins with Peter's recognizing that Christ, the expected Messiah, the Anointed One, lives in Jesus.

Peter's acknowledgement allows Christ to reveal something more of himself.

Contrary to expectations the Messiah will be rejected. He will suffer and die. And He will rise again after three days.



*Peter and Christ*

From our perspective, after the fact, Christ's own path is obvious. But to the Hebrews of His time, such a revelation comes as a shock; the Messiah would be rejected and *killed*?

So it is understandable that Peter objects and seeks to protect Him.

But Christ adamantly rejects Peter's well-meaning but purely utilitarian thinking. For Christ's mission has a much broader and higher context. The revolution He leads takes place both in the cosmic dimension and within the most intimate depths of the human soul.

In our own lives we can have flashes of insight, inspirations coming from the future.

But then objections arise: that's not what I had hoped for....that would mean....but I can't.

We sense the difficulties and call it impossible. We are unwilling, *un-willing* what wants to be.

Christ takes a much broader and deeper path, a *via negativa*, a path of descent.

Just as a mother must suffer birth pangs in order to bring forth a new human being, so too must He, and we, be willing to undergo rejection and suffering, and even the death of our hopes and dreams, in order to bring forth what really and truly needs to happen. As the poet Wendell Berry says:

"It may be when we no  
longer know what to do,  
we have come to our real work,  
and that when we no longer know which way to go,  
we have begun our real journey."

## A prayer for the earth, by Adam Bittleston

Spirits of the Heights  
Have sent their messengers:  
Stones under our feet.  
Upon the sustaining earth  
May we be upright.

Spirits of the Heights  
Have sent their messengers:  
Flowers and trees around us.  
Upon the living earth  
May our hearts waken.

Spirits of the Heights  
Have sent their messengers:  
Birds and beasts about us.  
Of all earth's offspring  
May we be guardians.

Spirits of the Heights  
Have sent their messengers:  
Light and dark, life and death.  
In all earth's changes  
Christ may we find.