

## **The value of labels**

*The sun will rise, the lockdown will end but the work must go on, says Jean Voyle Williams, a Reader at St Twrog's, Llanddarog*

We are living in a time unlike anything we have ever experienced before. Our churches and chapels closed, our schools have not reopened after Easter, socialising is on hold and we have to get accustomed to our new way of life during lockdown. I hear people saying "Things will never be the same again". The future looks uncertain and many questions unanswered.

Wasn't that exactly how the disciples felt after losing their Master?

They were in lockdown, afraid, unprepared for the future. Their lives had changed, they were frightened and knew that things would never be the same again. But there was a dawn, the sun did rise and the apostles, through the power of the Holy Spirit, took the message of the Gospel to different communities and it spread to all parts of the world. Everything became alive again, and we, the Christians of today, have benefitted greatly from that enthusiasm and commitment. We read in Acts Chapter 2 Verse 45 "They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need". Let's hope that after all this, we will remember the importance of the word "share" and act upon it. Let's hope that our society after Covid-19 will be a society that is better at sharing and that we pay more attention to the needs of others.

Isn't that what we have seen recently during this pandemic, with our NHS workers, carers and all our front line workers? They have been ready to share their time and talents with those in need of their support. They have been willing to go that second mile. We have also received kindness from our neighbours and the local businesses that have kept us going, with all of this proving priceless. Some people have spoken to, and got to know, their neighbours for the very first time. Living in a village like Llanddarog we have really seen the value of our corner shop and have experienced the kindness of people of all ages, one community working together.

Revd Hywel Davies shared a true story with me recently that made me laugh. A lady took advantage of the kindness of her neighbour and drew up a list of necessities she wanted from the supermarket, as he was kind

enough to shop for her. The neighbour brought them back and the lady was very grateful. As she was putting the tins and bottles away in the cupboard she noticed that they looked a little dirty, as if they had been left on the floor. She decided to wash them and put all the tins and bottles in the kitchen sink, washing them with very hot water and soap.

“That will be the end of those germs,” she said to herself. But when she lifted them out of the water she noticed that all the labels had come off. Every tin and bottle looked the same. It was impossible to distinguish between a tin of soup and a tin of baked beans, between a bottle of wine and a bottle of pop. She would have to take a chance when opening anything, hoping that it would please her.

Labels are therefore so important. Many labels were given to Jesus. Some of the familiar ones being Lamb of God, The Good Shepherd, Alpha and Omega, The True Vine, Light of the World, Emmanuel, The Great High Priest, Bread of Life, King of Kings, Prince of Peace, The Saviour. We also know that some of the characters of the Easter story gave Jesus their own labels, Son of David, Son of Man, Messiah, Son of the Living God. These are labels that tell us something specific about Jesus and his ministry. Whichever label we decide to give him during this anxious time, we know that we need Christ today more than ever before. We need to spread his love, we need to demonstrate to the world our responsibilities as Christians. Let's remember the words we find in the Epistle of James, Chapter 1 verse 22 “Be doers of the word and not hearers only”. We are the hands and feet of Jesus today, we are the ear for the lonely and the oppressed, and aren't we privileged that we can offer the hope of God's Kingdom, even in these difficult and challenging times.

May your faith remain strong and remember that there is a value to each of the labels given to Jesus in the Bible. Without them our appreciation of him would be like that lady who tried to sort out her shopping without any idea of the content.

Every Blessing.