



"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight!"

Proverbs 3:5-6

WHAT'S GOING ON @ ST MARYS

Our new Pastoral Assistant, Oliver, starts in early September. He's just finished a history at one of the London Universities and we look forward to welcoming him.

A SAINT TO KNOW

On Tuesday 24th, we celebrate St Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles. He's known in St John's Gospel as Nathaniel, where we see him being brought to Jesus by St Philip (St John 1:43-51).

DID YOU KNOW?

St. Ignatius of Loyola is sometimes known as the patron saint of decision making. He came up with advice on how to make decisions: Pray about it, look at all sides, imagine your final decision, act on your decision and then finally review what happened.

HELP! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

Do you find it hard to make a decision? What do you do when you don't know which way to go?

I have to admit God is not always my first destination. I'll ask my friends, my mum and I might even go on Google to see if someone else had a similar dilemma. Then when I've exhausted all options I'll go to Him in prayer.

I definitely know that's not the right order!

It's true God encourages us to seek advice but He also tells us to come to Him, one of my favourite Bible passages:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

Sometimes we think we can handle everything ourselves that if we think hard enough we'll come up with the perfect solution and hold back any storms that might come our way. But the truth is that we don't have that kind of power. Instead we have to have faith and entrust our lives and decisions to God.

Try this prayer next time you feel scared you'll take the wrong path :

Dear Father, I have a big life decision to make, please give me the wisdom and lead me in the way that I should go that I may be able to bring glory to your holy name. In the mighty name of Jesus.

Amen.



GOD ALREADY KNOWS

by Father Morris

When we know people well we know whether they'll want to watch the football or Emmerdale, whether they'll eat rice or chips. They're still free to choose whichever they prefer but on some matters there'll be no surprises.

This is basically what predestination means. We are free to make decisions because we are made in the image of God. A plant will only ever grow towards the sunlight: it has no choice in the matter. Human beings, conversely, can decide that we know better and don't need the sun.

Free will is marvellous. But it also means we have to make all these decisions, which can be time consuming, costly and disorienting. It might be even more frustrating to know that God already knows what we're going to decide to do. God does not see time as a sequence of events: it's all equally real to Him. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever," (Hebrews 13:8).

St Paul writes, "Those whom God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son ... and those whom He predestined He also called," (Romans 8:29-30). This ought not to make us fatalistic, thinking there's nothing we can do about stuff because it's already been decided. Hopefully it does remind us the value of asking God for His Holy Spirit, because He already knows what we've decided.

Is the decision we're making going to make us closer to God or had we not even thought about that?

WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

As Christians we often talk about 'Spiritual Discernment' simply put this is the ability to see what is right and wrong, what is realistic and what is unlikely, what you would like vs what you really need.

It means having good judgement and making good decisions. But how?

Grow in your knowledge of God, keep His words close to your heart by reading and studying the Bible everyday. Play an active role in the Church, the community of Faith. Apply these teachings to your life and share your faith with others around you and you'll soon start to see things from God's perspective.

KNOW YOUR SCRIPTURE

Grab your Bibles and find these readings and think about the answers to our questions:

1 John 4:1
Why is it important not to believe everyone claiming to speak for God. How can we test if they are 'False Prophets'

Romans 12:2
Can you think of a way you could be 'conformed to the world' and what does that mean?

John 7:24
Can you think of a time you judged someone and found out they were completely different? What made you change your mind?

Proverbs 18:15
What's the difference between being Wise or Clever? Which would you rather be?

