

St Francis Weekly News for TWELVTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 30th August 2020



This bulletin may have come to you by email or through your letterbox, if you received it on paper but are happy to receive an email in future please email deborah.lechmere@ntlworld.com If you know anybody else who would like this delivered or emailed please contact Deborah or Revd Janet: revdjanetwyer@outlook.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN ST FRANCIS CHURCH?

HARVEST FESTIVAL NEXT SUNDAY AT 10.30!

As you may already know, St Francis is taking part in the celebration of Creationtide, a 'Season of Creation' that stretches from September 1st to October 4th. It's a fairly new idea in case you are wondering why you hadn't heard of it before, and it is intended to focus our minds on the environment, climate justice and the things we need to do to address the serious problems we are facing together as dwellers on a beleaguered planet.

It ties in nicely with the traditional time to celebrate the end of the harvest, and we are looking forward to our Harvest Festival on September 6th at 10.30. I say 'traditional', but this too is a church celebration that isn't as old as you would think, and only really dates back to the 1840s, although in mediaeval times the village churches would have been fully

involved in the local revelry that took place at this time of year.

Both of these celebrations have things in common. They both assert our dependence on the fruits of the earth for our survival. They both focus our awareness of our inability to manage without showing responsibility to our environment – and they both encourage us to give thanks to God and to be mindful of His abundant gifts to us. It is always worth remembering that the difference between grace and nature is negligible in the teachings of the church – the world is a free gift to us that we should care for.

Look out for our window displays, special services and a themed St Francis All Age Activity Pack that will be on offer to anyone who would like one throughout this season of Creationtide.



LETTERS FOR CREATION

Letters for Creation invites children and young people under 30 to write letters reflecting on what caring for creation means to them and how they want their voice to be heard in the climate justice conversation.

We are aware now more than ever of how interconnected our lives are and the importance of looking out for our neighbours as well as our common home. In the midst of these uncertain weeks and months, Letters for Creation is a project that can be done from home and offers an opportunity to creatively channel concern for others and the world around us.

'Letters' don't have to be physical letters: videos, photographs, poems, songs, posters and so on are all welcome, and the 'letter' doesn't have to be addressed to anyone in particular.

Selected letters will be curated into an exhibition that will be launched digitally later this year, followed by a travelling exhibition that we hope will tour a number of cathedrals, COP26 (the UN's climate change conference), and the Lambeth Conference in 2021.

To take part, email lettersforcreation@churchofengland.org or send your submission to:

Letters for Creation (c/o Grace Emmett)
Cathedral and Church Buildings
Church House
27 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3AZ

SUNDAY SERVICES

We continue to be open for our Sunday service at 10.30am each week, you are warmly invited to attend, please be aware that face masks must be worn unless you have an exemption. Our new service of Evening Prayer is also on Sundays at 5pm, this is a traditional said service with space for quiet and contemplation; coffee is available afterwards if you choose to stay.

MUSIC IN CHURCH

Following on from the last two Sundays, although we still cannot sing together, we will be able to enjoy some beautiful instrumental music before, during and after our Sunday worship. If there is a

piece of music you would particularly like to hear please let us know!

At the moment we are playing instrumental music, because we have chosen not to have music which people might choose to sing along to. We apologise to those who would like favourite hymns or worship songs.

CREATIONTIDE DATES FOR THE DIARY:

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Sunday 6th September; 10.30am

CREATIONTIDE SUNDAY EVENING PRAYERS

Every Sunday 5.00pm

ST FRANCIS ACTIVITY PACKS IN CHURCH

Sunday 20th September; 10.30am

ST FRANCIS DAY SERVICES

4th October

10.30am – Patronal Festival

5.00pm – Evening Prayer



ST FRANCIS FREE FOOD

Please note that the telephone number for FREE FOOD is now **01603 431259** please leave a message on the answering machine which is regularly checked

We continue to offer food parcels to those who ask for help and hope to do so for the foreseeable future.

PLEASE NOTE WE ARE CLOSED ON BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY, AUGUST 31st.

If you or anyone you know is in need of a helping hand, please call St Francis Free Food on 01603 431259 or call at the church any weekday morning between 11am -12pm.

We would also be interested hear your thoughts on how we might take the Free Food project forward in the future. If you have any comments or ideas, please do get in touch.

PASTORAL CARE

Shielding has now come to an end and this means that the support from the National Shielding Service of free food parcels, medicine deliveries and care has stopped.

We are also hearing almost daily of changes in the government's response to the measures being taken to keep us as safe as possible from the virus.

If you are worried about any of the changes that are happening, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We are very happy to talk with you if that would be helpful.

Please do not feel that you are alone - help and support is always available, whatever may be troubling you.

Father Tracy [07704 328319]

Revd Janet [07990 576118] from Thursday 3rd September

Also, there is always someone available in the church building weekdays 11.00am – 12.00pm; please feel free to knock at the door, it will open to you.



USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

In these difficult times someone might just need one of them...

Childline: 0800 1111
Samaritans: 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline: 0808 2000 247

[If you hear a neighbour in distress please do not hesitate to call this number or 999; you could save a life]

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Age UK: 0800 169 6565

St Francis Free Food: 01603 431259

FOR OUR PRAYERS

We pray for those who are in acute need of prayer at this time: Kaitlyn; Maegan; Doreen F; Tom; Riley & his mum and family; Jeanette, David & Grace; Paula; Colin; Pete; Lauren; Fr Brian; Hazel, Ben and Frazer.

We continue to pray for all those in our Church, friends and family who are managing long term health issues including Rosemary, Sheila, John, Joy, Shirley and Frank.

We remember with love all those who have died in recent days and pray for their family and friends.

PRAYER FOR THESE UNCERTAIN TIMES

**The Church of St Francis
Heartsease**

Heavenly Father
We ask your blessing upon us.
Hold the Heartsease Community,
and all the world,
in your arms of love.
Be with us.
Give us your strength,
peace, and healing grace.
Watch over us,
protect us from harm;
and keep in safety
all those who care for the sick
and attend to our needs,
in Jesus name we pray.
Amen

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR 12TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience
is afraid
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God of all mercy,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:
grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

READINGS FOR 12TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JEREMIAH 15:15-21



O Lord, you know;
remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my
persecutors.
In your forbearance do not take me away;
know that on your account I suffer insult.
Your words were found, and I ate them,
and your words became to me a joy
and the delight of my heart;
for I am called by your name,
O Lord, God of hosts.
I did not sit in the company of merry-makers,

nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone,
for you had filled me with indignation.
Why is my pain unceasing,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook,
like waters that fail.

Therefore, thus says the Lord:
If you turn back, I will take you back,
and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious, and not what is
worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.
It is they who will turn to you,
not you who will turn to them.
And I will make you to this people
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you,
but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you,
says the Lord.
I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked,
and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

PSALM 26:1-8



Vindicate me, O Lord,
for I have walked in my integrity,
and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.
Prove me, O Lord, and try me;
test my heart and mind.
For your steadfast love is before my eyes,
and I walk in faithfulness to you.
I do not sit with the worthless,
nor do I consort with hypocrites;
I hate the company of evildoers,
and will not sit with the wicked.
I wash my hands in innocence,
and go around your altar, O Lord,
singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds.
O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell,
and the place where your glory abides.

ROMANS 12:9-21



Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

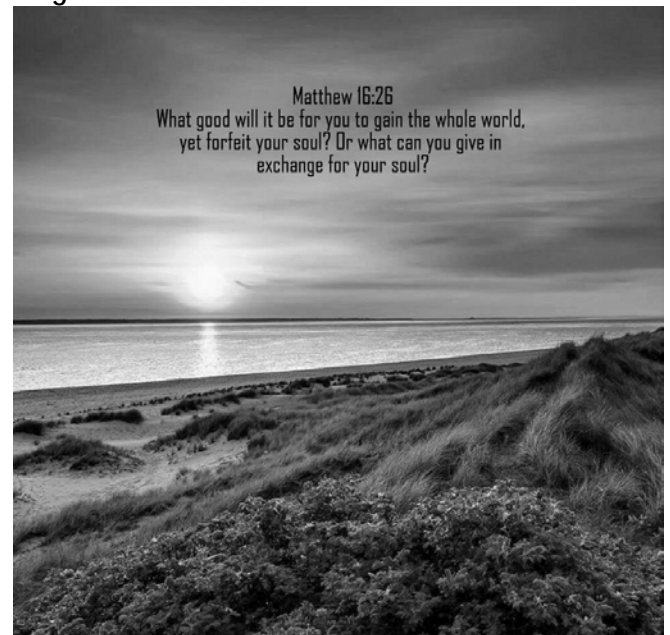
Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

MATTHEW 16:21-28

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'



Matthew 16:26
What good will it be for you to gain the whole world,
yet forfeit your soul? Or what can you give in
exchange for your soul?

REFLECTION FOR 12TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

In last week's reflection, David our reader referred to a line from Romans 12 in a translation of the New Testament by J B Phillips: 'Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within...'

In today's gospel we hear yet again about the tendency to let the world squeeze us into its own mould. Jesus makes it quite clear to his followers that his fate will not be quite what they were expecting. Peter really doesn't like this, and protests that the passion, death and resurrection of Christ must not be allowed to happen. And Jesus really seems to turn on him. All of a sudden, Peter, the rock on which the church is to be built, becomes a stumbling block. As Jesus says, he is setting his mind on earthly things, not the things of God. He is allowing himself to be squeezed into the world's mould. He has not yet fully understood.

Peter is speaking in the manner of normal religious thinking. Religious thinking demands the avoidance of suffering and death at all costs, and to ask God to make everything as nice and easy for us as possible.

Contrary to popular belief, following Christ is not a religion. It is a *way*.

Jesus explains that these old religious approaches must be replaced by a new approach. This is the approach that God's will must be done, whatever. Whatever the consequences are, and however much the world may oppose His will. These consequences may include suffering, they may involve death. There will also be a resurrection. As disciples, we are not called to accept these facts grudgingly – we are called to lean right into them, to celebrate them. That means taking up the cross, to walk a path – the way – and by doing so, embark on a journey of transformation.

By hanging onto our lives that are squeezed into the mould of the world, we are destroying our chance of being open to a deeper life. If we fear reprisal then we are no longer really alive – and for what? For some temporary security and social position. Jesus teaches that these must be lost, but in order to gain something much richer. Following Jesus involves sacrifice.

We see this working out all the time.

Jesus was a fierce critic of the hypocritical religious leadership of his day who valued wealth and status over teaching people, over caring for people, over saving people's souls. Jesus blew the whistle on them. In some ways, His prediction of death was an inevitability.

Look at whistle blowers today. People who are prepared to stand up for justice. They nearly always lose their way of life in some way. Think of police who call out abuse committed by other police officers. Think of the corporate employee who flags up an accounting scam. So often, criticism and cover-up go together, and those who try to reveal the truth are punished. They are scapegoated. They are scapegoated because, those who benefit from the establishment, will always choose to attack

those who criticise it and by doing so, curtail those benefits. When leadership does not know what to do, it does what it knows best, by punishing dissent and then attempting to cover up.

So why do whistle blowers do it? There are as many reasons as there are people who choose to stand up to injustice. The reason that Jesus gives, is that a deeper life, a life living in the knowledge and love of God, demands it. If we are silent, if we fail to speak truth to power, if we are squeezed into being complicit with the ways of the world, then, like Esau, we have sold our birthright for bread and a pottage of lentils. (Gen 25:29-34).

To not speak out is a classic example of leaving undone those things which we ought to have done; it is a sin of omission at best, and there is then no health in us. Our natural path is to escape responsibility. We all tend to take that path, much of the time.

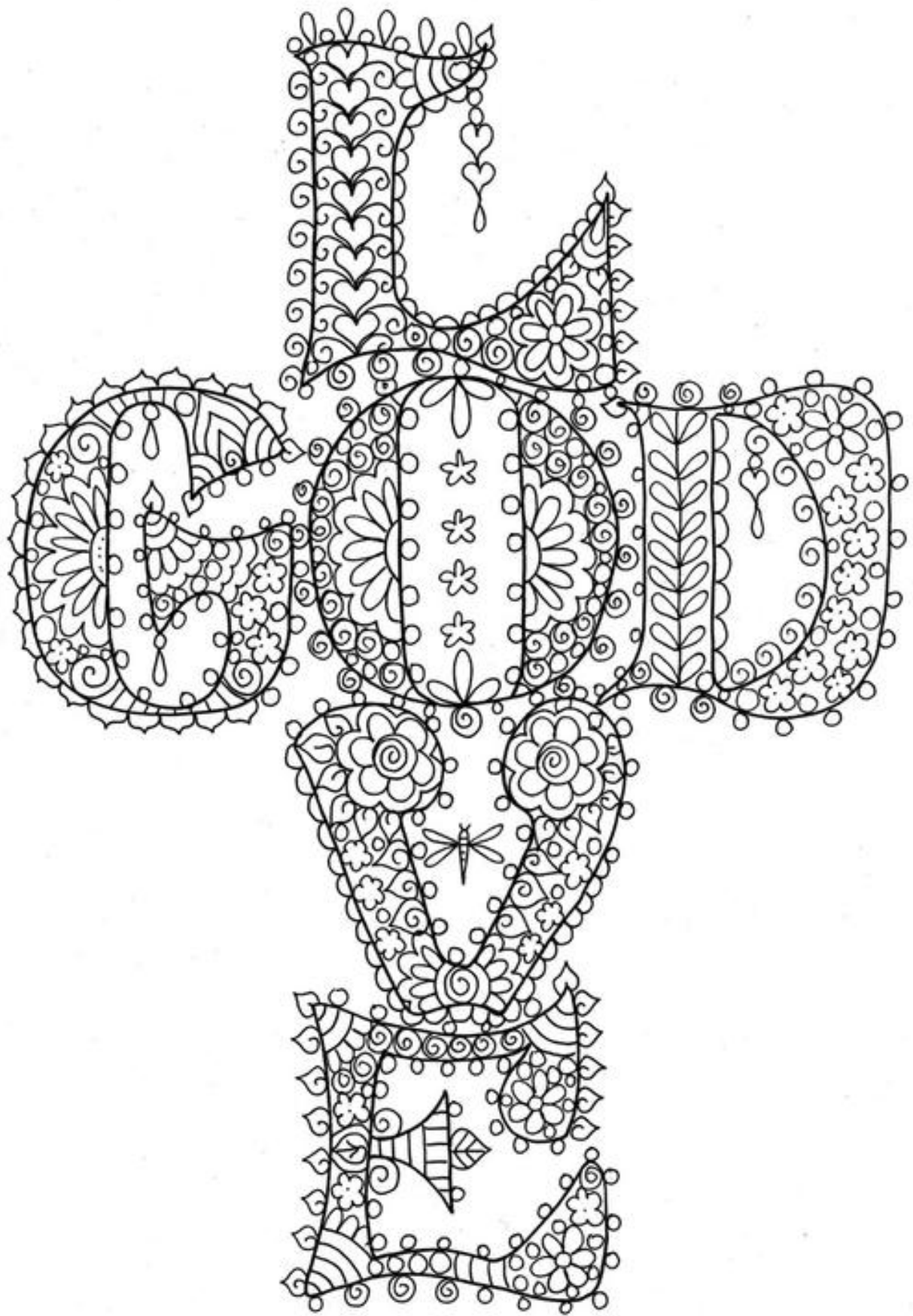
The gospels are really clear though. Our souls are at stake, and taking up the cross is something we are strongly encouraged to do. We see the cross daily – it is a struggle, a struggle between divine love placed into our limited human hands and resistance to it due to our hardness of heart. Every day, that cross is a stand off between God's will of love and our twisted desire to reject that love.

So discipleship is terrifying.

We must allow Jesus to take us on one side and remind us just as he reminded Peter. We must allow Him to explain to us that this is necessary – it is a 'must'. Jesus our teacher must rescue us and get us back into His teaching. We must listen carefully for that one word we somehow refuse to hear, above the clamouring of a defiant, proud and violent world that makes us deaf, squeezes us, tries to drag us in the wrong direction. That one word, a mysterious word, is resurrection.

We must allow Jesus to remind us that the secret of eternal life is to let God re-mould our minds from within. That way, we can lose, and find, our lives.

Father Tracy





The followers of Jesus didn't like everything he told them. Some things he talked about were difficult to hear and others were difficult to do.

Peter had just been praised by Jesus, for saying that Jesus was the Messiah, but as Peter listened now, he couldn't believe what he was hearing. Jesus was saying that he would have to suffer and die. 'I will be killed,' he said, 'but on the third day I will rise again.'

The Messiah can't die, Peter thought. 'God forbid it, Lord!' he said. 'This must never happen to you.'

Jesus got angry. 'You're not thinking as God thinks, Peter. You can only see things like humans do. If I thought like that, it would make me stumble instead of doing the right thing. Get behind me, Satan!'

This was hard for Peter to hear, but then Jesus told his followers to do things that sounded very tough too.

'If someone wants to follow me, they have to stop putting themselves first and take up their cross. If they want to save their own lives, they will lose them, but if they lose their lives following me, they will find them again.'

'What is the point of having whatever you want, if it means losing your life? What can someone give in exchange for their life?'

Jesus said, 'When the Son of Man comes in glory with his angels, he will repay everyone for what they've done. Truly, I say, some of you standing here now will see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom before you die.'

Activity time

ROOTS children's sheet

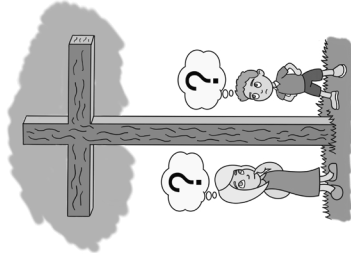
30 August – 5 September 2020

Name



Matthew 16.21-28

Jesus explains that being a follower will not always be easy, and that whoever puts themselves first will end up coming last.



Family time

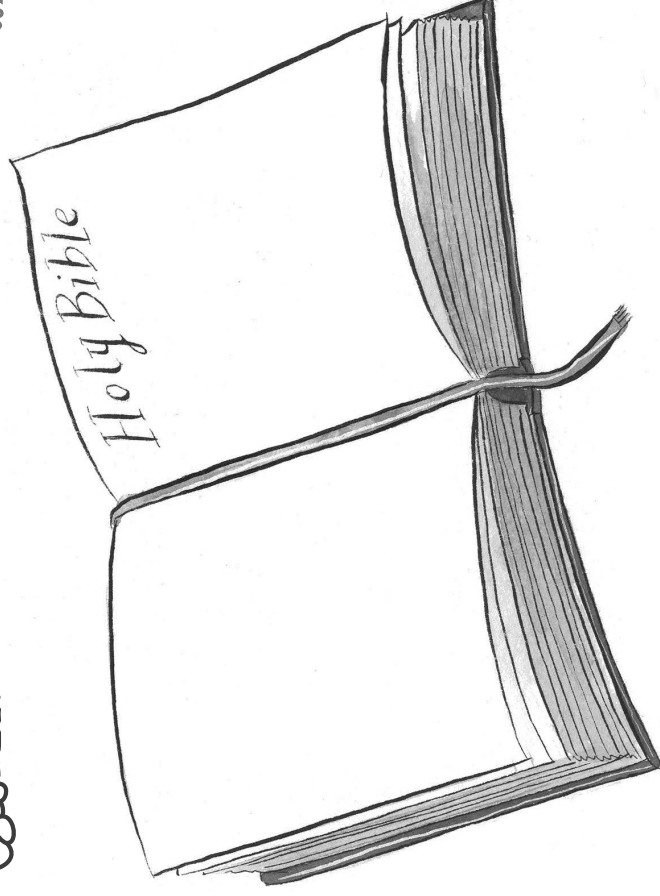
Talk How can we put others first instead of ourselves?

Do Challenge each other to find several things that are 'as hard as they are good' (e.g. sport, faith, hobbies) to try out this week.

Pray Dear Lord, thank you for teaching us that the path of following you is not always easy. Please give us patience, strength and help us to focus on the journey. Help us to know that it is worth carrying on. Keep us close to you, now and always. Amen.



Add to the Bible things which are at the heart of Jesus' story.



Puzzle

Can you find these key words from today's Bible passage in the word search?

s	b	i	i	c	w	e	h	l	t
c	s	f	q	p	x	s	n	h	w
z	g	e	e	s	i	u	e	a	x
q	k	t	l	f	p	m	J	i	c
h	e	v	l	f	s	j	e	s	x
r	o	e	c	e	l	b	s	s	r
g	s	z	l	r	p	e	u	e	u
x	q	v	d	r	o	L	s	M	g
s	e	l	p	i	c	s	i	d	e
s	f	o	l	l	o	w	s	u	w

cross selfless Messiah
 themselves Jesus follow
 Lord Peter selfish
 disciples



Write the missing words in the correct gaps to discover what Jesus said.

_____ said: 'Whoever wants to _____ me should stop putting _____ first, and take up their _____'.

cross

follow

Jesus

themselves

Name

Colouring time

'If anyone wants to follow me, they have to stop putting themselves first and take up their cross.' says Jesus.

