**Morning Praise @ Home 2nd July 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading John 10: 1 – 12

**Reflection**

**Part 1 from Ruth**

When I was at school in Ireland, learning the Irish language was compulsory. The way it was taught was by learning grammar and memorizing sections of writing.
It was incredibly boring and I hated it - as a result, I didn’t learn very much.
Then when I was 16, my family went on holidays to Kerry, where Irish was spoken locally.
There was a language college with lots of very attractive students, and plenty of social events.
And in that two weeks away, I learned more Irish than I had in the whole of my time in secondary school, because I had to speak Irish while socialising and I was enjoying myself!

Research has shown that the best way to learn a language is through actively engaging in it. That means conversation, visiting the country where that language is spoken, and immersion in it.
And that is what the disciples did - they learned as they went along, it was through experience not academic study that they learned and grew.

**Part 2 from John**

LEARNING ON THE HOOF

We all learn and grow differently. Some of us learn through books and thinking.

Others through doing - Some learn visually - others through ideas.

Somehow Jesus knew this instinctively. He told stories with a great punchline or sting in the tale. He painted pictures with words. In truth his real skill was training his followers to learn by doing.

As a boy he learned through watching his Dad – Joseph – a carpenter. He must have learned how to make a wood joint seeing his dad make such things and having a go himself.

That is how Jesus taught his followers, his friends to do the things God had asked him to do.

Jesus showed God’s ways and God’s future by living it and doing works of love, grace and miracles which his followers first of all observed.

Then he did those same things with his friends and followers and then he let then have a go and in due course he sent them out in groups and said that in the future you will do the things that God wants for you and from you.

Firstly, they watched and observed. Then they did with Jesus and learned on the hoof how to see God’s future work out in practice.

Then he commissioned then to get on with it with the ongoing help of God’s Spirit.

There are no passive passengers and pew fillers in God’s Kingdom.

Think for a minute how you throughout your life did not simply attend Church but how you have been apprenticed to grow alongside a few others into mature, active and engaged followers of Jesus.

LET ME SAY THE SAME THING AGAIN IN DIFFERENT WORDS.

Jesus always started small. He deliberately chose FAT FOLLOWERS.

Fat means Faithful, Available and Teachable. This was more important than picking clever ones who wilfully wanted to make a mark and do their own thing.

Read Mark 3:13-19.

Then Jesus gave himself wholeheartedly to these few followers. And he asked them to give themselves to him. They needed to learn to listen to Jesus and follow his lead. They were a mini community of learners and apprentices who would be with him TOGETHER. They were not attenders they were engaged belongers. That meant looking at their lifestyle and priorities in order to prioritise knowing and following Jesus.

Now let me explain how this band of followers developed:

Jesus gave Himself to them and was for them. The foundation of their relationship to Him was His love and

self giving. He lived discipleship before them on a daily basis and there was no limit to His love for them. His commitment to them, and giving of Himself for them was the motivation of their giving themselves totally for Him.

Then Jesus taught them by showing them. All the disciples had to teach them was a teacher who practised with them what He expected them to learn. So they learned to pray by hearing Him pray, learned how to engage with the Bible by observing His handling of it. They learned how to minister by watching Him ministering.

They learned how to model their faith and tell others because they saw Jesus their discipler do it first.

Being an apprentice or Disciple of Jesus is easier caught than taught. And what Jesus did for his followers he then wants his disciples or apprentices to do for others. Read Mark 6:30 which comes before the feeding of the 5000.

The Apostles that Jesus had sent out to preach - returned. They gathered around him and told him all about the things they had done and taught.

And in that small grouping they learned fresh lessons from one another and from Jesus himself.

That’s what learning on the hoof is all about.

I want to suggest that whatever we think Church is for needs to be adjusted to be more like the way Jesus grew his followers together into courageous and passionate seekers after God’s best who seek to grow others to seek God’s best for all around them.

THAT IS NORMAL HEALTHY CHURCH.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

Father, thank you that you love me as your own dearly loved child.
Thank you, Jesus, for your selfless friendship and care for me.
Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you lead me and help me understand God’s good will for my life.
Lord, I commit to trust you with my life, my plans and my cares.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Father, we live in a world where some of us throw out food while others go to bed hungry; where some have modern amenities of life at their disposal and others struggle to find drinking water. May we learn to share with one another and, in this way, come to share in your generosity to all.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Father, impress on world leaders the weight of their responsibility and the need to work together for peace and the common good of all humanity.
Shine a light on our world leaders – on what is done out of ego or selfish ambition, what is corrupt and for the benefit of the privileged few – so we can see what is true and what is false.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Father, please shine your light of salvation and mercy into the refugee camps, the slums, the warzones, the crazy and corrupt regimes. Walk into these places and declare freedom for the prisoners, the refugees, the desperate and dying.
Forgive us, Lord: we forget about them so easily in the midst of our own concerns.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Father, we pray for our schools and students.

May they be places of learning, growth, and wisdom, where students are able to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed.

We ask that you would give wisdom to teachers, guiding them in their work and empowering them to make a positive impact in the lives of their students.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Father, we pray for all those who suffer. Today we think particularly of the mentally ill or handicapped, and all those who are disturbed or troubled. Give wise heads and tender hearts to all who care for them, and help them to be agents of your healing power.

 **Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**