Feast of Christ the King 2020

We look back a lot. It is very important to us - our memories are our identity - as individuals, as families, as a parish, as a community. But we cannot only look back - difficult as it is we must try to look forward. That can seem not just difficult but impossible at the moment - there are so many uncertainties.

We celebrate Christ the King - Christ the shepherd king. A leader who serves - who serves especially those in need. And he expects us to cooperate with him in looking after his flock. We often prove ourselves to be good at this - caring for neighbours, caring for those in our community and further afield through our generosity. We may hope to hear, when we arrive at our time of judgement ‘in as much as you did this to the least of my little ones you did it to me’.

Christ, our King, is leading us into the future - and as well as reflecting on the past we must, as he does, think of the future. Part of the future must be concern for our young people. It is easy to spot where there is material need - and to try and help with that. What is harder to think about are spiritual needs - and our children and young people are starved of spiritual things. The present crisis has made this worse. Our preparations for First Holy Communion interrupted and postponed, the youth group that was making small steps forward, stopped during lockdown. We already know that the dearth of young people among us, and the general religious illiteracy among the younger parts of our community do not bode well for our future as a church. The schools valiantly do what they can - but the constraints on them are great.

If we merely worry about our future as a parish, a church, then we will get nowhere. We will resort to remembering the good old days. Comforting, but not otherwise helpful. We need to keep in mind that our young people, our future, are starved of good spiritual food; of direction; of hope. They are as needy as anyone in our society. The often poor state of mental health among them speaks of this. I wish I could come up with an action plan to instantly help with this. I can’t - but if we keep it in mind, if we act when we can, if we dwell on the future as well as the past then pathways will be found. At judgement day we will be asked how generous we were to the poor and needy - and how generous we were in investing in our future - our young people.