



## A Reflection for The Seventh Sunday of Easter Readings - Acts 1. 6-14 & John 17. 1-11

The May bank holiday weekend in Cartmel, we would normally have been teeming with thousands of welcome visitors enjoying our unique and medieval village. The Priory would have been bustling with a large congregation including race goers taking a spiritual rest bite from the first jump racing at Cartmel Racecourse. But 2020 is a very different year as we are learning to keep safe, staying home and for there to be no gatherings as we come to terms with the effects of the global pandemic. We lament that we are unable to be in community, to be in close proximity with one another.

The world is having to adapt and to change as we develop new ways of being in contact with one another. There are many questions. How will gatherings of any size be able to come together if we are having to continue the present restrictions so that we can all be safe?

It is not only the racecourse that is closed but on what would have been a very busy day for The Priory we too are closed to the public.

We are to try and not to be overwhelmed with the current situation. It can be all too easy to get stuck in a position of longing for the time before lockdown and not wanting to look at the reality of where we are. That is understandable. It is hard staying home but we may find ourselves stuck not one thing or the other.

*Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.*

The disciples are possibly experiencing something similar. They are living with a very real threat from the Jewish authorities if they were to speak publicly as to who they believe Jesus to be. Jesus is The Messiah. That He is risen. They too may be lamenting as to when they walked and talked with Jesus. When life was calmer and not so stressful. They are now in an upper room as they come to terms with the reality that Jesus has ascended and gone into heaven. They too may feel stuck wanting to go back to that time of personal interaction with Jesus and anxious to move forward working with change.

In obedience the disciples return to Jerusalem and wait. They reflect upon the culmination of the Jesus story with The Ascension. Together located in the upper room they pray, talk, reminisce and challenge one another as they seek to spiritually go deeper, as they consider the events of the Jesus story.

As a nation we are adapting and changing as we wait. We are finding new ways to move forward with the current situation. We are finding new ways as we look to the future. Our homes have become multi-operational units. Our kitchens are hosting virtual parties, have become classrooms and disco studios; our bedrooms are also our offices and fitness rooms; our sitting rooms are our Cinemas, adventure playgrounds and until recently our places of worship.

Organisations across the world are having to reimagine how to operate in a world with greatly reduced personal interaction. The Church will also need to adapt and to change. The challenge ahead will not be easy but this is where we find ourselves. By trusting in the Jesus story we can find a new way for that is what the disciples did.

Thank you for reading and please keep safe.

The Reverend Nick Devenish

*Adrian's music choices for Easter 7 - 311 Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour. Psalm: 68, verses 1-10.  
Music: Organ music: Messiaen - Transports de joie (from L'Ascension)  
(Make sure that the neighbours are out before playing this! A brilliant performance from St. Sernin, Toulouse)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtSflqkt03w>*

*Image - Jump racing at Cartmel Racecourse*