



A Reflection for Sixth Sunday of Easter Readings - Acts 16. 9-15 & John 14.23-29

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us.

In the late 400's and the 500's, mosaic art began to be used in churches to interpret stories from scripture. The mosaic is from the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, and several important figures and stories from Hebrew scripture are shown. If we focus our attention on the centre and the left element of this image we are reminded of another time when a home was opened in hospitality to visitors. Abraham greets the three visitors and offers them refreshment. The visitors reveal to Abraham and Sarah what God is prepared to do for them and for their children.

For the early church, it was a common practise to interpret events from Hebrew scripture as parallels to events in Christian scripture. By placing this scene near the altar in this church, this meal is interpreted as preceding the communion meal of Christian worship.

This is the hospitality of God: opening the divine heart to all and welcoming all into the household of God, the church.

We value our monastic roots which have guided The Priory for centuries with the offering of welcome to pilgrims. We too continue this with the offering of welcome to the thousands of visitors who spend time in The Priory every year.

Thank you for reading and keep safe.

The Reverend Nick Devenish

*Night Prayer from Cartmel Vicarage is live streamed from 9.00pm week nights on Facebook.
Keep connected by going to the Cartmel Priory Facebook page.*