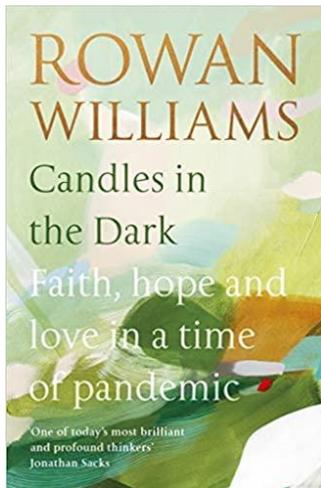


Dear all



I am currently reading a fascinating little book that I would heartily recommend. It is written by former archbishop Rowan Williams, and entitled *Candles in the Dark: Faith, Hope and Love in a Time of Pandemic*. From March to September last year, he wrote weekly meditations for the parish church he attended, reflecting on a wide range of subjects, but never straying far from the effects of the virus. Meditations are about 4 pages each, and easily readable.

I would like to share an extract from his reflections on the feast of Corpus Christi (11th June) – literally the feast of the corpse of Christ! It was one of the great medieval feasts, and celebrations in the church, but is largely forgotten in the CofE today, except for very high Anglican churches.

He talks of how the Eucharist is an expression of our common life together, and how difficult it has been for many people when we have not been able to share the sacrament. Reflecting on the place of the Eucharist in history, he writes *the Eucharist is not only an affirmation of the common life we experience in the Holy Spirit, and it is certainly not just a celebration of human togetherness. We look back with puzzlement at the days when – in both Western and Eastern churches, well into the 20th century – relatively few people actually took Communion regularly. They went to church to gaze at the drama of God's work of redemption and to adore and give thanks.*

This often represented a distorted model of the Eucharist, one that went all too comfortably with a pattern of clerical domination and privilege. Yet, to speak personally for a moment, I have found that the experience of concentrating on 'spiritual communion'; of quieting myself down to focus on the greatest gift of God in Jesus, absolutely present in this act, in a moment of physical stillness and silence – all this brings home to me the truth that our common life, in and out of church, depends simply on what has been done for us, and in response we can only gaze and adore and give thanks.

What a positive perspective to have when we are not all able fully to share in the Eucharist, but are only able to view it on a screen.

Sunday service details

I have been asked to give details of the Sunday's service. I will try to remember in time in future.

Readings: Genesis 14: 17-20; Revelation 19: 6-10; Psalm 128; John 2:1-11.

Hymn: Songs of thankfulness and praise

I have attached to this email a copy of our latest [Prayer Diary](#). For those who have not come across it before, it is a way of organising our prayer over the days of the month. Each day has a specific topic, and also roads of DSJ, and church members divided equally(ish) between the 30 days that ¹¹/₁₂ months have. If your name does not appear, it is because you have not given me permission to make your name public (NB there is no link between the names and roads, unless total coincidence!). If you want your name to be added, please let me know.

Bible Study: In our bible study, we will be looking at the Gospel of Mark. This week we will be looking at Mark 1: 14-31, but please read to the end of the chapter, just in case.

We will meet on Zoom, Thursdays 2.30-3.30ish pm. The Zoom details are:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/8109399155?pwd=STVVTU44RzJxTFFHbTY1MnI0bjZzOz09>

Meeting ID: 810 939 9155

Passcode: 1w2C9a

This is an excellent overview of the Gospel in the context of the liturgical year: [The Voice of Saint Mark: Year B and the Gospel of Mark | Thinking Faith: The online journal of the Jesuits in Britain](#)

Here are the books Sonia and I referred to earlier today, + another that looks very good, which I have not read. I have not included the Morna Hooker books, as they appear to be very expensive to buy! (But they are good!)



Marking Time: 47 Reflections on Mark's Gospel for Lent, Holy Week and Easter – Nick Baines

This book aims to help us reflect on God, Jesus and Christian discipleship during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. In what way is Jesus good news to each of us, personally? What gives real meaning to the well-worn words 'good news'? Straight-talking short reflections and prayers based on Mark's "Gospel" lead you through 48 days of Lent to Easter on a journey of real discovery. The author's pugnacious, pithy and vulnerably honest view of the key themes in Mark's "Gospel" will reveal the familiar through refreshed eyes. Nick Baines aims to release us from shallow readings of scripture and looks at why Jesus mixes 'good news' with something that sounds as miserable as 'repentance'. He opens up new and liberating perspectives on the love of God.

Journeying with Mark: Lectionary Year B Kindle Edition – Paula Gooder, Mark Pryce & James Woodward

This is a book to accompany the readings in year B of the Lectionary. It aims to help individuals and groups to understand and use Mark's Gospel. There are two other books that will follow this one: Journeying with Luke in Year C and Journeying with Matthew in Year A. This book's unique slant is that it asks readers to use their imagination 'to bring the Gospel to life.' It asks readers to visualize themselves in the scenes that Mark describes in order see Mark's Gospel in a fresh and exciting way.

The Strangest Gospel: A Study in Mark – Nicholas King

For many people, Mark's gospel has become so familiar that they no longer notice its oddity and may therefore miss what it is saying about the meteoric new reality that is Jesus. Nicholas King calls Mark's gospel 'the strangest gospel' and makes a good deal of this 'strangeness' in this accessible and immensely readable study.

Meeting God in Mark: Reflections For The Season Of Lent – Rowan Williams

A fresh look at the message and meaning of Marks Gospel by one of the world's greatest living theologians. Rowan Williams explores the essential meaning and purpose of St Marks Gospel for complete beginners as well as for those who've read the Gospel many times before and want to see it in a fresh light. Written at a highly accessible level and packed with illuminating spiritual insights, this book would make a perfect gift for anyone thinking about confirmation, while also appealing to people who may simply be curious about Jesus and the Gospels and want to learn more about his significance.

Mark for Everyone – Tom Wright

Tom Wright's eye-opening comments on the gospel and what it might mean for us are combined, passage by passage, with his own fresh and involving translation. Making use of his true scholar's understanding, yet writing in an approachable and anecdotal style, Wright captures the urgency and excitement of Mark's gospel in a way few writers have.

This week's gorgeous piece of music – from Handel's Giulio Cesare (Julius Caesar).

[Nathalie Stutzmann & Philippe Jaroussky - Recording Handel duet "Son nata a lagrimar" - YouTube](#)



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark