

Reflection: June 19th

June 19 is the birthday of Blaise Pascal, the religious philosopher, mathematician, and physicist, born in France in 1623. Pascal invented the first mechanical calculator for sale to the public; the syringe; and the hydraulic press, as well as early forms of probability theory and integral calculus. Though his family wasn't religious, he was deeply impressed with two Christian mystics who cared for his father during an illness, and he converted to Christianity. One night in November of 1654, he experienced a divine vision he later called a "night of fire," poetic notes from which he scribbled down on a piece of paper, and then sewed the paper into the lining of his coat, so he could keep it close until his death. The year after his vision, he left Paris to live in the Abbey of Port-Royal, where he wrote his most famous (though unfinished) book, *Pensées* "Thoughts").

Here are two of his thoughts:

1) If you don't have faith, Pascal wrote, try acting as though you do. Do the things that a faithful person would do, and over time, you may well find your actions leading your heart and mind in faithful directions. In other words, don't worry too much about what you believe; focus instead on your actions, on how you are living, and your convictions will follow.

2) In what has become known as "Pascal's Wager," Pascal argued that, while definitive proof of God's existence exceeds our grasp, this shouldn't surprise us. Whenever we face ultimate, unanswerable questions, we are unavoidably in a position of "wagering," effectively betting on perspective or another. And for Pascal, this is indeed the situation when it comes to God: either we bet on the idea that God is real, or on the idea that God is a fantasy. And if God is real, Pascal reasoned, there is a great deal to be gained by believing and acting as if God is real (and a great deal to be lost if we don't!); and if God is a fantasy, there's comparatively little lost no matter what we do. So it makes more sense, he concluded, to "wager" that God is real — and by extension, to live our everyday lives accordingly. This famous idea is often misunderstood as a kind of clever "proof" of God's reality — but that's the last thing it is. Pascal's starting point is that such "proof" isn't possible. Rather, his idea amounts to a recognition that genuine faith doesn't involve proof or certainty, but rather a humble and courageous "betting our lives" on God.

From www.saltproject.org

June 19 may also happen to be the birthday of other people as well!

Fr David

Codes for Zoom No further Zoom services planned at the moment.

Meeting ID:
Passcode:

Telephone numbers: 0203 481 5237,
0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 26.06.2022 Trinity 2

SERVICES: 10.30am in Church

READINGS: OT 1 Kings 19: 15-16, 19-21
NT Galatians 5: 1, 13-25



GOSPEL Luke 9: 51-62

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St Thomas, Exeter

19th June 2022

Trinity 1

10.30am in Church

Today

10.30am Sung Eucharist.

Tuesday 21st June

7.30pm House Group

Wednesday 22nd June

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

2-4pm Young at Hearts

Thursday 23rd June

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots with Breast-Feeding support.

10.30am Knit & Natter in St Thomas Park

Friday 24th June

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 25th June

12.30pm Ladies Lunch at the Royal Oak



Collect

O God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 65.1–9

I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, 'Here I am, here I am', to a nation that did not call on my name. I held out my hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and offering incense on bricks; who sit inside tombs, and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, with broth of abominable things in their vessels; who say, 'Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am too holy for you.' These are a smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day long. See, it is written before me: I will not keep silent, but I will repay; I will indeed repay into their laps their iniquities and their ancestors' iniquities together, says the LORD; because they offered incense on the mountains and reviled me on the hills, I will measure into their laps full payment for their actions. Thus says the LORD: As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, 'Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it', so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah inheritors of my mountains; my chosen shall inherit it, and my servants shall settle there.

Galatians 3.23–29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian

until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Luke 8.26–39

Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me'— for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) Jesus then asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'Legion'; for many demons had entered him. They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss. Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. Then all the people of the surround-

ing country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

Post Communion

Eternal Father, we thank you for nourishing us with these heavenly gifts: may our communion strengthen us in faith, build us up in hope, and make us grow in love; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

For our services in Church, **mask wearing** is not now compulsory but we would still advise it while infection numbers remain high. If you are coming to coffee, we also recommend wearing a mask until you are seated in the Hall.

Knit and Natter Summer 2022 In June, July and August we will meet in St Thomas Pleasure Ground or at 19 Maple Road according to the weather, every Thursday from 10.30am to midday. Details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

Community Larder is receiving donations on Tuesdays from 10am-12noon.

St Andrew's, Exwick. Please note that Fr David and Rev Sarah are covering some of the Sunday morning services at Exwick after the retirement of Jerry Bird.

St Stephen's Church From 2 June onwards there will be a display in St Stephen's showing changes in our city centre churches with some good old photos and more recent events.

As many of you already know, Fr David is taking **sabbatical leave** over the summer, starting in the middle of July and ending in the middle of October. He is also away for the first part of July on a course at Windsor (postponed from 2019), and his last Sunday before the sabbatical is 17 July. Do please ask him his plans if you are interested!