



**St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey**  
**Sunday, 20 February 2022 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Before Lent**  
**Readings: Revelations 4, Luke 8: 22-25**  
**Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard**

**Singing for our life and times**

We may not be world class singers but who doesn't enjoy a good sing? Take, for instance, the sheer exuberance of belting out 'Land of hope and glory' on the last night of the Proms? By contrast, during WW1, singing 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag and smile, smile, smile', was a stoical way of keeping positive, during desperate times. And, here at St Andrew's the fact that you all did 'lift up your voices' harmoniously, as encouraged by the first hymn indicates that you do enjoy singing the hymns and the liturgical sentences. Opening our diaphragms to sing is good, not just for our physical and mental well-being but also for our souls: so, keep pumping it out!

**Singing for faith in ages past**

Our generation is by no means the first to sing out its faith. If we take a quick trot through the Bible, in the Old Testament there are many instances of the Israelites pouring out their joys and sorrows in song. The Psalms perhaps contain the best examples. Psalm 122 bursts into heartfelt joy 'I was glad when they said to me let us go into the house of the Lord'. By contrast Psalm 137 begins, 'By the waters of Babylon, we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion'.

**Singing a song of courage**

In the New Testament, shortly after the annunciation of the angel Gabriel to Mary, when visiting her cousin Elizabeth, Mary bursts into song "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour." And, on that fateful night in the Upper Room at the conclusion of the Last Supper, when Judas had gone out to commit his act of betrayal, Jesus and the remaining disciples, with courage, sing a hymn before going to the Garden of Gethsemane

**Singing in reverence for times to come**

Springing forward now to the extract from Book of Revelation that was read to us earlier, the heavenly host sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.' These words are very familiar to us because they are the words of the Sanctus that we sing during the celebration of the Eucharist. Perhaps because they are so familiar, we could forget the majesty of the person to whom we offer our praise and thanksgiving. We only have to recall the astonishing bejewelled imagery that John describes, of his vision

of heaven, to know that heaven is like no place we have ever seen on earth and that above it all sits our Lord God on his throne. How can we possibly grasp something that we have never seen and, further, apply it to our own lives?

### **Singing through God's creation**

We need to find a new song through the eyes of things we have seen and in human words that we can utter. In the Gospel of Luke, how we can empathise with the disciples in their boat, as the gale reaches its height. We know only too well, in these last few days, how the wind rolls the sea into turbulent waves crashing upon the ashore. And, how often, when driving along the west coast, as a gale blasts across the Atlantic have, we said, "I'm so glad I'm not on the sea now!" The disciples, seasoned fisherman though they were, feared for their lives, as the power of the wind and waves swamped the boat. When Jesus calmed the storm, the disciples were the first to glimpse his power and majesty in controlling creation, yet at that stage they are without full understanding, for they say 'Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?' They had yet to learn, as I prayed in this extract from today's Collect 'Almighty God you created the heavens and the earth, ... teach us to discern your hand in all your works ... through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things.'

### **Singing for the world**

We can easily slip into the habit of singing our praises and thanksgiving, Sunday-by-Sunday, in the calm of the church that is like an Ark of spiritual welfare. What Christ calls us to do as his disciples, is to continue singing in world throughout the storms of life that we and others experience. To sing beyond the security of this worshipping community. At the end of the service, as we step outside with the last words of the liturgy in mind, 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, in the name of Christ', our point to ponder, is how with the courage of Jesus and his disciples, we might sing afresh, a hymn of praise in daily living to inspire others. Amen.