

Julian and Audrey Thompson

11 9 16

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers
of your people who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive and know
what things they ought to do,
and also may have the grace and power
faithfully to fulfil them.

Our text may be found in today's gospel reading, Luke chapter 15 and verse 7:

'Joy in heaven'

Joy is not the normal word you associate with the death of anyone, especially when it is someone we love and respect and to whom we owe a real debt. But this morning, when we remember in particular our brother and sister in Christ, Julian and Audrey Thompson, it is an encouraging fact that the welcome we will receive in heaven will be one of joy and gladness, that the race is run, the prize won, and we are at last safely home in the bosom of the God who loves us more than we can know or deserve.

On our behalf, the Church Council has commissioned a brass memorial plaque to engrave their names in this place that they loved. Julian and Audrey were key members of our church for decades. It was Julian I first contacted back in January 1994 about the possibility of undertaking a holiday chaplaincy here. It was Julian

who contacted me in February 1995 inviting me to come and take the Easter services at the end of March that year. It was Julian who invited me to do 11 chaplaincies in the years up to 2006 and it was Julian with Doreen Collier, then our Church Wardens, who appointed me to be the first 'full-time', paid chaplain here since the Second World War.

What Julian and Audrey did, what they achieved here as part of their generous Christian stewardship, was to build up St Bartholomew's, building on the firm foundations of over a hundred years so that as we approach our 150 anniversary in 2021, our church will be like a lighthouse built on a rock, enlightening those who wish to be part of this House of God.

Our gospel passage from which our text is taken – 'Joy in heaven' – gifts us with two parables about that which is lost – 'The Lost Sheep' and 'The Lost Coin'. These pair are in fact a triple but you'll have to wait for another occasion to hear me preach on my favourite parable, that of 'The Prodigal or Lost Son'. But let me suggest that each of these two in their own way do embody something of the real virtue that Julian and Audrey embodied: that of hard work and due diligence and care. In the first story, the central character is a man, a good shepherd, who goes off in search of his lost sheep. In the second story, the central character is a woman, a housewife who makes every effort to find her gold coin that has inadvertently been mislaid, fallen on the floor somewhere in her home. Both embody the virtue of focused effort, proper hard work, valuing what we have and making sure it's properly cared for and looked after. There is real shared joy when the sheep is found and brought back to the sheep fold, when the coin is

found and returned to a safe, secure place. And let me suggest that the real legacy that Julian and Audrey have left in this place they loved and cared for is their willingness to go the extra mile to make sure that St Bartholomew's grew into the church we are today.

So let me end by saying that there is real joy not only in heaven where Julian and Audrey are now reunited in death but here in St Bartholomew's where we can remember them both with affection, love and gratitude.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Preached at the Eucharist

St Bartholomew's, Dinard

11th September 2016

G: Sermons 34 :Julian and Audrey

