

Easter and our Human Vocation

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*"In this world so tempted by despair there may be no other source of hope than trust in the God who has given us his word."*¹

Who am I? What should I do in life? What is the meaning of life? Humans have been asking themselves those questions since the beginning of time. It can feel as Christians in our country that 'we are like blacksmiths in the world of cars'² looking to be relevant to our neighbour. Each generation needs a new answer. This week I wish to reflect on the question 'What is the meaning of human life today in the context of the Easter story?'

I'm going to suggest that our life as Christians and a church is the answer to that question. We make sense of life as humans by pointing to something beyond ourselves - to God. We are able to do that in the light of the story about the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. That story gives us a role to play and it extends beyond the horizon to the Kingdom of God – it allows us to be part of something bigger than ourselves.³ By finding meaning in that story; by singing a new song and pointing others towards it we are offered an invitation by God to be a human being in a new way.

In these talks I will examine an issue of our modern world and reflect on what it means to point to God under such circumstances – how we can sing a new song to the Lord.

There is a crisis of meaning and high levels of anxiety in our society. We are not sure what story to tell; what stories to listen to and what stories to believe. The importance of stories in life and how they bring meaning is illustrated by the wonderful tale of 'Watership Down' by Richard Adams. I will structure each talk in three parts:

1. An extract from Watership Down
2. A reflection on our world today
3. A theological story/reflection to help us point towards God

¹Radcliffe, T. (1999) Sing a New Song: The Christian Vocation, Dublin, Dominican Publications. p.32

² ibid., p.210

³ Harari Y N (2018) 21 Lessons for the 21st Century, London, Jonathan Cape. p.276

The full text of these six talks can be found at <https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/MDW-Holy-Week-talks-2019-002.pdf>

1. The Bear and the Nun
2. Silence and Honey Cakes
3. Identity and Maypoles
4. 'Hessed'; the act of love as deed
5. Reflection – vulnerability and courage
6. Easter morning – the power of celebration

Mike joined the Cathedral Chapter in November 2016 following a career in the Royal Navy, the NHS and academia. He was ordained in 1993 and after serving as a Residentiary Canon he was installed as Canon Treasurer on Palm Sunday 2018.

