

Connecting faith and daily life

Janice Scott *reflects on* Mark 2:23 – 3:6

“The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath,” Jesus retorted when he was challenged on yet another trumped-up and trivial charge. The Pharisees are portrayed in the Gospels as self-righteous rather than spiritual, ready to pounce on the slightest infringement of religious Law, no matter how petty. As all good leaders should, Jesus defended his followers, using scripture which the Pharisees would know well. Probably they were instantly silenced.

But why is Jesus’ remark about the sabbath important? Because if people were made for the sabbath they would need to be perpetually trying to live up to the exacting standards of a demanding God and therefore doomed to failure. This is how the religious leaders tried to live and what they wanted to impose upon everyone else. On the other hand, if the sabbath is made for people, then it is a day for relaxation and refreshment, the gift of a God who loves people just as they are, without impossible demands.

If God loves us just as we are, then perhaps we can stop trying to be perfect and just be ourselves, knowing that our human mistakes do not condemn us in God’s sight. God loves us and is well aware that none of us is perfect. Let us live in the freedom of the Spirit and learn about loving and serving one another, rather than constraining ourselves in the rigid straitjacket of imposed religious law. 🙏

Freedom to be ourselves



God of love, help me to remember that you love me and always will, despite knowing me through and through. Help me to be true to myself and therefore true to you. I ask this through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The General Synod

Part 1 – What is General Synod?

by Becky Mynett

The Church of England is a family of institutions – including parishes, cathedrals, dioceses, chaplaincies, etc. – rather than a single entity. This family is governed by a complex (and soon to be simplified) network of national institutions.

General Synod is the Church’s legislative body. Just as Parliament makes law for the nation, General Synod makes law for the Church of England. It has four areas of responsibility: preparing

legislation, national church finance, liturgy and speaking into society on issues of national interest. Its legislative responsibility – passing “measures” which become the law of the land – is devolved from Parliament.

Every measure that Synod passes is sent to the Ecclesiastical Committee in Parliament to be approved and subsequently sent for Royal Assent. Prior to the establishment of Synod’s predecessor, the Church Assembly, in 1919, all changes to Church governance or worship had to be by Act of Parliament. 🙏

“Our life is not a possession to be defended, but a gift to be shared.”

Henri Nouwen (1932-1996), Dutch Roman Catholic priest, writer and theologian

The Books of the Old Testament

Part 27 – Daniel – a subversive book

by Richard Greatrex

Richard Greatrex continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

On the surface Daniel looks straightforward: chapters one to six contain stories concerning the survival of exiles after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC; chapters seven to twelve consist of a series of visions and their interpretations.

The early stories split into two types – interpretations of dreams and deliverance from danger, such as Daniel’s

escape from the lions’ den, or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s salvation from the furnace – folklore from exiled communities. Chapters seven to twelve also reflect antagonism towards those who are powerful.

Antiochus’ violence felt like the end of days for Jewish nationals. However, we know from the books of Maccabees that they fought back, prevailed and eventually restored the Temple. The book of Daniel was integral to that spirit of resistance and throughout history it has been inspirational as a radical text for cultural and theological revolution. 🙏