

St Peter's, Ealing
Sunday 8th December 2019
Advent 2 – Family Mass

For everything written in the past was written to teach us.

I love books – books are great – one of my biggest frustrations is not having enough time to read. One of my greatest joys is having time to read. Books tell us stuff. Books tell us stories and they teach us stuff. One of the saddest things I ever heard was a pupil at a school where I was governor saying 'I don't like reading'.

St Paul, writing in his letter to the Romans teaches us this too. He says everything written in the past was written to teach us. We should remember that writing wasn't something done lightly. Writing in St Paul's time was very expensive, both in money and in time. Writing was also a very rare skill. Ink and parchment were very expensive, you only wrote something down if it was worth writing down. In Paul's time writing was a very serious business. You wrote down important stuff, stuff that would better inform you, good stuff.

In the Bible we get all sorts of stuff. We get stories; we get history and social comment; we get interpretations of what God wants in the world and wants for his people. The people who did this last thing, interpret the will of God for his people were called prophets. Sometimes people think they told the future but that is not the case. Prophets were guided by God to tell the people of God what God wanted of them. Sometimes their words were difficult to take, and the people treated them harshly. But if you are going to speak the words of God you must be truthful and sometime the truth hurts.

For Paul, these words are important because they point to the salvation of the world, the forgiveness of sins by God and the putting right of our relationship with God. The prophets told us that God would send a saviour into the world to proclaim God's love for us. We believe that Saviour is Jesus Christ, the Lord.

But for Paul, it doesn't stop there. God's work of proclaiming this truth must go on in the lives of the faithful. Paul says if we believe Jesus is the saviour of the world then we should be prepared to proclaim it to others. If we believe Jesus

came into the world to save sinners then we must tell everyone about it. In other words, Paul is telling us to become prophets in our time.

How do we do this? By living the gospel of Jesus, by living in the love God has for us all. This means as prophets we must change from the ways of the world to the ways of God. This not only means talking about God; it also means living Gods way, living in kindness, gentleness, goodness and peace. They will know we Christians by our love and by the way we love others.

Today's message for us is to live as prophets for our day. We are called to proclaim Jesus in word and action so that others will know Jesus came as a child, as one of us to show us the way of God's love and to save them too.