**#54 2 October 2022, St Godwald’s Patronal AND 9am BCP; Trinity 16**

**2 Timothy 1:1-14**

Salutation

**1**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

**2**To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

**3**I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. **4**Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. **5**I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. **6**For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; **7**for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

**8**Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, **9**who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, **10**but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. **11**For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+1%3A+1-14&version=NRSVA" \l "fen-NRSVA-29804a" \o "See footnote a)] **12**and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Timothy+1%3A+1-14&version=NRSVA" \l "fen-NRSVA-29805b" \o "See footnote b)] **13**Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. **14**Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

**Luke 17:5-10**

**5**The apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith!’ **6**The Lord replied, ‘If you had faith the size of a[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke%2017:5-10&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-25650a)] mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea”, and it would obey you.

**7**‘Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, “Come here at once and take your place at the table”? **8**Would you not rather say to him, “Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink”? **9**Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? **10**So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, “We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!”’

Last week, we had a clergy study day, at which the guest speaker was Bp Martin Seeley, the Bishop of Ipswich and St Edmundsbury. He took as his subject the concept of ‘resonance’. He took his ideas from a book of that title by Harmut Rosa, a German sociologist, which carries the daunting subtitle, ‘A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World.’ Bishop Martin was interested in how Rosa’s ideas might be useful to us in church life, and how we take our Good News out into the world.

He started by explaining the original idea – he was fascinated by tuning forks, used by singers and other musicians, to find the right note. A tuning fork is essentially a 2-pronged fork that is u shaped – and if you ping the two forks, they hum at the pitch of a known note; and of course you can get them pre-tuned to all sorts of notes. When I worked in the Theatre, actors who had to sing a song onstage always needed them in the wings before they went on – they always lost them too, we got through hundreds of the things. But Bishop Martin told us that, if you ping a fork and then bring another one close to it, on a tuning box, the vibrations will transfer from the one to the other – the vibrations, or resonance, will be taken up by the second from the first, without any need to ping the second. Something is, somehow, passed on.

Now, I’m not claiming to understand all of what we did last week, and I’m not claiming to have been fully attentive throughout either. But it started me thinking when I turned thoughts to St Godwald, as today we celebrate our patronal day in this church dedicated to him.

Why do I feel a resonance with St Godwald? Why is this church dedicated to him, and why do remember him?

I’m sure many of you know much more than I do about St Godwald – as Janet Grierson says in her book that’s at the back of church, he was a 7th century saint from Brittany. She goes on to say that he was either associated with, or actually was, Gurval, an early Bishop of Aleth, near St Malo in Brittany. And we have a lovely, if slightly faded tapestry of him at the back of church, and we do our very best to honour him in this place. But we don’t know that much. And what’s the Brittany and Worcestershire link?

Resonance comes from his rarity value – whenever I tell people about this place, they always say they’ve ever heard of St Godwald – and they show an interest, and always ask who he was. So there is an immediate resonance there; someone once said to me St Mary’s Churches, for instance, are ten a penny, and Holy Trinities are all over the place, but St Godwald – well, that’s a bit different; it resonates differently. And that might be created by our lack of knowledge, but nevertheless, just the fact that we continue to remember St Godwald means that he maintains some sort of a resonance here. It might be more symbolic than actual – which is what my atheist family would say that that’s all were doing at the eucharist - but it’s here. In Paul’s letter today, we heard Paul saying that he was appointed a herald, an apostle and a teacher. St Godwald no doubt continued that discipleship, and I’m sure he’d say, with our Gospel reading today, I ‘have only done what I ought to have done.’ Whether his presence for us is symbolic, or if we feel we have a resonance with St Godwald himself, people want to know more about him, and wonder why this church bears his dedication.

Its easy to identify with people on slender evidence, especially if they seem to be an underdog. I’ve been reading a few books recently about a 19th-century musician and have become so interested in her life that I’ve started to feel a resonance that I can’t possibly justify. Her name is Clara Schumann, and she was a brilliant pianist, easily the equal of the more acclaimed virtuosos of the day, Rubenstein, Liszt, Chopin. But possibly because she was a woman, she has only recently started to come into her own in reputation, as research has uncovered more of her life, and recordings of her own music have been made. But I have felt a resonance with her as I have with St Godwald; I certainly can’t articulate why, but I am very happy that both have made some sort of positive effect on my life. Life is all the richer for me because of them. They hum alongside me, much of the time.

We are talking about slender threads here, both for St Godwald and for Clara Schumann. And slender threads was what Bishop Martin was talking about too – he was wondering how we, as followers of Christ, might resonate with people that we only rarely see in church; how might we share our mission in a feeling, a vibration, a spirit, towards people that we meet beyond these walls. As we’ve seen, we don’t need to have masses of information to form some sort of connection. And so whatever action we make, all of us, however small it might be, and however briefly, might just get people to look on Christ’s love for them in a different way. We are all called, like St Godwald was and as Paul says to Timothy, to ‘guard the good treasure entrusted within you with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us,’ so that what we do in Christ might just resonate with someone, somewhere - as St Godwald has resonated with us here.

You never know where it might lead.
Amen.

(Clara Schumann aged 59, below)

