

Easter 5A

I notice from the News these days that Britain, especially London, is woefully short of affordable housing. With an influx of new immigrants the situation is getting more acute. That being said there is an enormous number of vacant properties as well, which is a scandal.

But, from today's gospel we have the consolation of knowing that the same won't be true of the next life. Jesus says to the apostles: "there are many rooms in my Father's house. I am going now to prepare you a place". He means a place not just for the apostles but for us as well.

Having a place prepared for us is one thing – taking it up is another? A very early name for Christians was "followers of the Way". Jesus tells us however, that the way to Our Father's house is narrow and not everyone finds it. The second reading invites us to "set yourselves close to Him". Drawing close to Jesus will ensure we're heading in the right direction. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus initially saw Jesus as a stranger until they invited him into their house for supper which, for us, foreshadows the Eucharist. It is by means of the Mass that our relationship with Him is strengthened.

This same reading also says that Jesus was 'rejected by men but chosen by God'. So the narrow way to my Father's house will obviously include rejection of some kind or another. By standing by my Christian principles, I may sometimes feel alone and misunderstood - even by family and friends. Jesus felt abandoned by his apostles during his passion. Apart from St John, they all deserted him.

John the Baptist's clarion cry was "prepare ye the way of the Lord, may His paths straight". So the way to God's Kingdom may be narrow but is also straight. It has no blind alleyways. It is us who put obstacles in the way. We can deviate from the

'straight and narrow' and get lost. But Jesus came to "seek out and save those who are lost". If we repent of our sins and turn back to Him with all our hearts we'll have reset our sights in the right direction.

The way to Eternal Life is also illuminated. Following Jesus will mean that we don't walk in darkness. "God has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light". I remember one late December night coming back from Ireland when my car broke down at some out of the way place in central Wales with no lights or signs anywhere. It was a frightful experience – no *sat-nav* around then. Jesus talks about lost souls - the Prodigal Son being one of them before he came to his senses. If we know anyone who seems to have lost their way in life do we help facilitate their return to the 'straight and narrow' or put more obstacles in their way?

Jesus is the Way that leads to Life. If we always stick by Him, a straight, lit-up, well-signed way opens up before us. Our final destination may be some distance away but we'll have no fear of arriving at the wrong place.