

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 should never be.

But, from today's gospel we have the consolation of knowing that the same won't be true in the world to come. Jesus says to the apostles: "there are many rooms in my Father's house. I am going now to prepare you a place". These words are addressed to us as well.

Having a place prepared for us is one thing but taking it up is another. The very early Christians were known as "followers of the Way". In the second reading, Peter writes: 'set yourselves close to Him. Being close to Jesus will mean we become true followers of the Way which leads to life. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus initially saw Jesus as a stranger until he revealed Himself to them at the breaking of Bread after which they felt really one with Him.

This same reading also says that Jesus was 'rejected by men but chosen by God'. So following the narrow way to my Father's house will include rejection of some kind or another. By standing by my Christian beliefs, I may sometimes feel alone and misunderstood - even by family and friends. Being distanced from our families and friends during this present lockdown can get us down but following Jesus faithfully will not mean that people will always want to be close to us.

John the Baptist's clarion call 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 turn back to Him with all our hearts after a fall we'll soon be back on track.

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 coming back from Ireland late one foggy night in December when my car went on fire whilst driving on a narrow road at some *out of the way place* in central Wales with no lights or signs anywhere. It was a frightful experience – no smart phones around then. I had taken a wrong turning and lost my way. Seeing a light in the distance I walked across fields, knocked on the door and after some initial hesitancy, the people turned out to be ever so helpful – they even drove me to the nearest station some 10 miles away. Have we ever come across anyone who seemed to have lost their way in life whom we've helped to return to the right path or have we 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 address.