

The Rector writes:

MAY 2018

‘THY KINGDOM COME’

Throughout his life St Martin remained in essence a man of prayer, no matter what his position in life, as hermit, pastor or bishop, prayer was the one essential, paramount part of his life. Prayer has always been at the heart of monastic life, and indeed is the very lifeblood of the church and the Christian faith.

In recent years the church has struggled to attract new converts to the Christian faith and to church membership – and in 2016 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a call to the church to pray for new converts in the days between Ascension and Pentecost.

Thy Kingdom Come is a simple invitation to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for friends and family to come to faith. Now in its third year, participation has grown every year. In 2016 – 100,000 Christians pledged to pray. By 2017 – more than half a million had pledged to pray from more than 85 countries including Ghana, Netherlands, Malaysia, Cuba, South Africa, Australia, Korea, Japan and the Philippines to name a few. In the UK, in 2017 every diocese in the Church of England was involved. Many cathedrals took part, hosting 'beacon' events designed to focus prayers in towns and cities nationwide. The campaign's broad ecumenical appeal led to more than 50 denominations and traditions being involved last year; including the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church and the Redeemed Christian Church of God. The positive impact of Thy Kingdom Come 2017 continues to unfold as numerous stories of personal and communal transformation pour in from churches, families and whole communities alike.

This year the theme for the novena (nine days) of prayer is **‘Changed Lives → Changing Lives’**. We are invited to pray with Christians round the world **from 11-19 May** as we pray afresh for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Just as the Apostles prayed together following Jesus' ascension as they waited for the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, so we wait and pray today. Like those disciples, and later ones like St Martin, we too need to pray in obedience, trusting that the way ahead will be revealed. Like them, we need to pray anticipating that the Spirit will show us new ways of living and loving that will enable our faith to be shared. Like them, we need to be open to where God leads us, open to change that might be necessary for the church to grow.

All of us of course pray this prayer daily – in the Lord's Prayer – 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done'. So what we are being asked to do is quite natural, it is simply that we are asked to perhaps concentrate a little more deeply on the words we pray.

So how can you join in? There are several ways:

- Use the daily pocket prayers booklet that will be available in church
- Join the Rector for a short daily office see the calendar in this magazine for details of times.
- Come and join us for an hour of silent prayer on Thursday evening.

Whatever you do, will you include in your prayers people who you know who might come to know Jesus. They might be members of your family, neighbours or friends, or perhaps just people you know who are having a tough time at present. **We** are not asking **you** to bring them to Jesus (though if you feel you can, please do), rather **you** are asking the **Holy Spirit** to do his work.

St Martin was a man of prayer and people flocked to learn from him, let's make St Martin's a people of prayer and hope for a result - as we pray **‘Thy Kingdom Come’**.

Yours in Christ,

Reverend John, your Rector.