

## Homily for the third Sunday after Trinity

Today I am thinking about caring.

Herbert Leslie Gee spent his life telling tales. He lived in Bridlington and specialised in writing and telling stories about the Yorkshire coast.

You may have come across "Folk Tales of Yorkshire" or "500 tales to tell."

He also wrote the popular "Friendship Books" under the name of Francis Gay.

This was one of his stories:-

*In this story he tells the tale of a young boy from a poor family who taught himself to read and write.*

*He says the boy's teacher was the local shoe maker or cobbler he was a clever man who had read lots of books and was very wise.*

*When the cobbler was very young he had an ambition to become a preacher but his poor home background prevented that and instead he became a cobbler to earn money for his family.*

*The boy he was teaching to read and write did well and he was eventually ordained.*

*The cobbler said:-*

*"It was always my desire to be a minister of the Gospel, but the circumstances of my life made it impossible but you are achieving what was closed to me so I want you to promise me one thing - I want you to let me make and cobble your shoes - for nothing - and I want you to wear them in the pulpit when you preach, and then I'll feel you are preaching the gospel that I always wanted to preach and standing in my shoes."*

The cobbler had made it possible for the young man to become a minister. In fact he made it possible for the young man to become what he had aspired to and the old man's reward would one day be the same as his pupils.

Believe me being a priest is not easy!

Having the responsibility of the souls of a church puts a huge burden on the ministers.

Ministers are tasked with building a loving and growing community but for that to happen sometimes things have to change and many people resent any form of change.

Here in our Benefice we are praying for growth - but all growth involves some form of change. The only things that don't change are those things that are dead.

Perhaps they were good ideas that have run their course.

Or maybe just things that have run out of energy.

Ministers need support!

Let me give you a true example:-

A young vicar and his wife were struggling with a small congregation who wanted everything to stay as it used to be.

Then tragically their young son was killed in a road accident.

The church people swung into action and took over the day to day running of the parish.

They were sympathetic to the family.

They left cooked meals on the doorstep and they praised the bereaved vicar and his wife for what they were trying to do.

However when they looked at the church from the vicar's point

of view they realised what he was trying to do and perhaps some of his frustrations. So they joined in.

Soon the feeling in the church changed, and new people attending the church for the first time realised there was an atmosphere of love in the people because they had reversed roles and the people were now caring for their carer.  
Within a year the congregation had doubled!!

Jesus said if we welcome God's messengers as if we were welcoming God himself, then God will dwell in our hearts.  
The poet Robert Browning wrote:-  
"All service ranks the same with God."  
Just like the cobbler whose role was to prepare the carer.

So I wonder what are our roles in God's kingdom?  
Well I know we are doing lots of them already.  
But that shouldn't make us complacent there is always more we could do.  
More that Jesus wants us to do.  
There is always a "cup of water" to give.

Jesus said that any kind deed, done for anyone and however insignificant will receive a reward.  
Now if you expect to receive a reward here on earth you will most probably be disappointed. God's rewards are everlasting!  
It seems good deeds and hospitality go hand in hand.

I read this inscription in a book by David Adam  
*I saw a stranger at yester'en.*  
*I put food in the eating place,*

*Drink in the drinking place,*  
*Music in the listening place,*  
*And in the sacred name of the Triune*  
*He blessed myself and my house,*  
*My cattle and my dear ones,*  
*And the lark said in her song,*  
*Often, often, often,*  
*Goes the Christ in a stranger's guise.*

I wonder have you had the privilege to be the Christ in a stranger's guise?  
As servants of Christ we don't do good deeds in the hope of a reward.  
We do them because we love Jesus and remember his kindness to us.  
The promise of any reward is an added bonus.  
On the scale of things we will be rewarded for doing great things for God.  
But equally we will be rewarded for the little things too.  
A cup of water.  
A drink to someone who was thirsty.  
A loving word to someone in difficulty.  
I love the message of the hymn "Brother let me be your servant."  
But this serving is a two way thing - we must also learn to receive kindness too.  
In verse 6 the hymn says:-  
***Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.***  
What a wonderful thing it is to be the people of God and to be the servant of Jesus and of those we meet.  
Amen  
Revd. Stephen (With promptings from others)