

## Message from the Bishops

Instead of the usual words on the readings it seems appropriate to include these words from our Bishops received this week by clergy and licensed lay ministers for the Feast of Saint Luke.

“Dear sisters and brothers in the LORD

Next Sunday, 18th October, will be St Luke’s Day. You will recall how the Apostle Paul referred to his dear companion (in his letter to the Colossians 4.14) as ‘the beloved physician’. For this reason, his feast day has always been an occasion to pray for medical staff and healthcare workers – and perhaps this year we might all wish to do so with particular urgency. Worldwide last week, daily newly recorded Covid-19 infections rose at a record rate; and in our own country, all the trends (the R number, new cases, hospital admissions deaths) are now rising.

If St Luke was indeed the author of the third Gospel, as I assume, then it is no coincidence that of the four Gospel writers, he is the one who draws most often on the language of ‘salvation’. In Greek, that noun has a wider meaning than we sometimes catch in English, and could just as well be translated as ‘wholeness’, ‘healing’ or ‘wellbeing’. Similarly, the verb ‘to save’ (as in Luke 19.10, ‘the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost’) can equally mean to heal and to make whole. So St Luke’s Day is also good moment for each of us to invest in our own wellbeing. It is increasingly clear that we face a difficult winter ahead. Many of us are already exhausted from the effort which has been required of us since the Spring; and it is truly daunting to realise that we will still be fighting this virus when next Spring comes. Many of us are already having to dig deep each day to keep going, and will have to draw on all our reserves to cope as dark winter weeks close in. Do please make space for your own needs therefore and be gentle with yourself. Let the salvation of Jesus be your balm – he is in himself our healing, our wholeness.”

+ Pete Sheffield

+ Sophie Doncaster