

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Unity of Purpose

Easter 7, Yr C - John 17:20-end

We're now deep into assessments at my university. Students are working hard to complete them and, for my final-year Radiotherapy students, they're also completing final clinical assessments.

Once done, they will graduate and go into our hospitals to hopefully begin a lifetime of service to our patients.

As healthcare professionals, at the end of their graduation ceremony, they stand together as one, to recite a version of the Declaration of Geneva. Adapted from the Hippocratic oath, they will 'solemnly pledge to dedicate (their lives) to the service of humanity'.

A solemn pledge – for what they will do is indeed sacred within our profession. Perhaps key for me is that the 'health and well-being of my patient will be my first consideration'. We've taught them the medical and scientific aspects of Oncology and Radiotherapy, as well as the legal and professional frameworks they must work under – but above all, the patient comes first.

No matter who they are; their backgrounds, faiths or none, they now have a common goal – a unity of purpose, made clear through this declaration, as a culmination of their healthcare studies and training. Care and compassion come first and foremost in their careers; for my students, caring for our cancer patients.

Within this week's gospel, we hear of the powerful prayers of Jesus for the disciples in their unity of purpose – in witnessing to Jesus and spreading the Good News of the love of Christ and the Father.

But the prayer also now extends – for those who believe through their words; because of their lives as disciples of the risen Lord. Prayers that all may be one – illustrated in the most powerful way as how Jesus and the Father are one. That the love of the Father extends through Jesus to the disciples and everyone, following in the way. A unity of purpose with the greatest origin, our loving Father and creator.

We all, as Christians, have this unity of purpose – to show a love, care and compassion to all, as the very heart of our faith and discipleship. What we say and do is immensely important in showing that the Father's love is there for all. Jesus' mission to the world is now our mission – may we show a unity of love in proclaiming God's message daily in each of our lives, through the risen and ascended Son; Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Rev Canon Dr Mike Kirby, Liverpool Cathedral; PTO Blackburn Diocese

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES