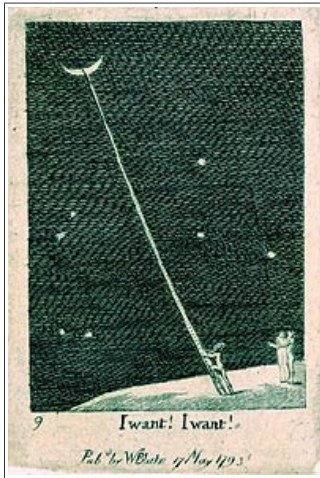


## “What do you want?” - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday (B)

Normally, I dislike clutter or ornaments so my fridge door was a free-magnet zone. Over time, however, I have weakened and now before I get out the milk or orange juice, my eye is greeted by magnets depicting such things as a cartoon of Charles Darwin bestriding a Galapagos tortoise, an early morning photograph of our cathedral and Alice sitting down to have tea with the Mad Hatter.



And, very recently, yet another fridge magnet appeared. It shows a black and white drawing of a man, who has put up a ladder into the night sky, the top of which leans against a crescent moon. It is a beautiful image from the late-eighteenth century by William Blake but what won me over were the words Blake wrote beneath the drawing: ‘I want! I want!’

Isn't that the human condition? We are attracted to something and we want it because we believe it will make us happy and feel complete. How many of us have opened the fridge door and stared in hoping to know satisfaction?

Tonight we have listened to a passage from the first chapter of St John's Gospel and it includes the very first words of Jesus in that Gospel. Our Lord turns to the two men following him - two disciples of St John the Baptist - and asks them, ‘What do you want?’ But that's the problem: we often open the fridge door not really sure what we want - we just want - and still not knowing what we want we know this: it's not amongst whatever is in the fridge. However, the two disciples, matured by John the Baptist, know exactly what they want. They respond to Jesus with another question, ‘Where do you live?’

When I was doing my A-Levels, discussions of future careers among my friends always included archaeology, despite our complete disinclination to spend our days in mud and trenches. I suppose this was because at the beginning of career magazines archaeology was listed first; we never got through those publications as far as zoo keepers. But then most of our conversations were not about future careers at all but about each other. That's what we really want. We want to have parents, friends, a husband or wife, children. That's what we are looking for that we shall never find in the fridge. That is why the disciples came back with their question; what they want is Jesus.

When we think of vocation we think of someone called by God for a special work like Samuel in tonight's first reading or priests and religious sisters and brothers. But in our very bones what we desire is to be with others then that is our fundamental vocation and we shall only be satisfied if we follow that vocation. And that's what the two disciples were doing: following the universal vocation of all human beings, seeking the company of another, asking, ‘Where do you live?’

But we shall all be disappointed if we keep our sights low. With the best will in the world, parents, friends, husbands, wives, children will let us down. They can't help being weak, ill or dying. And so there we are: ever to be frustrated and disappointed, staring past the magnets into the fridge.

Yet once in history, two men looking for good company, as the vocation of their very humanity demands, heard the words, 'Come and see.' And then began a friendship that never failed them for Jesus always did good and even death could not defeat Him. You and I will only ever be satisfied by life with others for that is our vocation and the only other who can satisfy is Jesus Christ. We are made to be with God. He is why life is worth living and so His Son says to you tonight, 'Come and see.'