

"I know I always can trust you"

Towards the end of my recent sabbatical leave, I went to Lee Abbey on the North Devon coast for a Prayer Retreat to reflect upon retirement later this year.

One of the wise guides suggested it would be good to choose a "theme song" for this next stage in life. At first I didn't think this was a very good idea! Then I remembered that on a previous visit, fifteen years ago, before my interview to be one of your Bishops, I sang a hymn on my prayer walks.

That hymn was *"Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do"* by Jenny Hewer and it has been a special favourite ever since. It's a wonderful reminder of God's trustworthiness in the face of life's challenges. The verses cover the whole range of anxious questions; "What will I do?" "Where will I go?" "Who will I be?" "What about my family?" and "How will I cope?"

To each set of, quite genuine, worries, the hymn concludes; *"For I know, I always can trust you"*.

The final verse focusses on walking close to God and loving his people, the Church;

"Father, I want to be with you and do the things you do,

Father, I want to speak the words that you are speaking too,

Father, I want to love the ones that you will draw to you."

It's a lovely call to pastoral leadership and it continues to inspire me after 39 years of ordained ministry.

But my wavering loyalty to God is overwhelmed by his faithfulness to me. In response to an enquiry about faith during a Question & Answer session with school children at the Cathedral, I said; "Faith is less about what you believe, more about who you can trust".

This month I celebrated the Golden anniversary of my Confirmation. After over 50 years of following Jesus, "I know I can always trust him."



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