

Dear friends,

On Friday we travelled to London to stay overnight with good friends we have known since Romania. John's marriage to his Romanian wife Ella was my first wedding I conducted on returning to the UK. We were in London to attend the Globe theatre for the play "Macbeth". Louise (and John) had studied Macbeth at school and amazingly could remember huge tracts of the play. Ella and I were pretty much in a different boat altogether and I was actually reeling from the fact that they all wore modern dress, the three witches were men, and King Duncan was a woman! It seems that to see a Shakespeare play in the form that it was originally meant to be seen is very old fashioned and everything needs to be "updated". It may please some, but some American tourists behind us spoke for the majority I think, in loudly voicing their disquiet. (The same thing happened when we went to see Romeo and Juliet a couple of years ago which had been through the same modernising process, and I hated it) It makes me aware more than ever that tinkering with tradition is done at our peril and has to be done very slowly and sensitively and doesn't achieve quite what the modernisers were hoping for it seems to me. Despite all of that, the acting was very good, the setting magnificent and the script mostly left alone.

A horrible drive back from London in heavy greyness and driving rain and an accident on the M4 didn't leave me in the best of spirits but Sunday morning came to the rescue with uplifting services followed by a much-delayed BBQ to celebrate St. Peter's patronal festival. Thank you to all the team that gets together to organise these things!

Sunday 30th July – 8th after Trinity – Proper 12

Canon Mike Williams will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's, and I will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30 and 11am respectively.

1 Kings 3: 5-12. Solomon asking for wisdom to enable his kingship over the people of Israel is a well-known story in the Bible. Ironically it seems that historically Solomon didn't manage to rule particularly wisely at all and "the heavy yoke" he burdened the people with and the subsequent division of the kingdom (prophesised during his reign as a punishment for Solomon's love of other gods) attesting to the fact. Just like nowadays being popular abroad (with the queen of Sheba for example) doesn't necessarily translate into popularity at home.

Romans 8: 26-39. This lection starts with a cry of human weakness when it comes to the subject of prayer but ends with the claim that human and divine connection can never be separated by either human or demonic powers. We are safe in the hands of God who searches our hearts and nothing can thwart his will.

Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52. A series of parables brought together to convey and describe the kingdom of God. It starts from small beginnings, is present within society for the good of all, and its value is beyond all material treasures. Finally, Matthew offers something that deals in threat and eternal fires “with weeping and gnashing of teeth” typical of his Jewish scribal training.

Sunday 6th August at 6.30pm. Budleigh Church Partnership

Temple Methodist church invite everyone to their evening service to share fellowship and worship together. Rev. Wayne Grewcock will lead the service. Teas and coffees afterwards.

Thought for the day.

As a result of the trauma of the debacle over our erstwhile associate priest I was offered various forms of counselling by the diocese. The one I chose to engage with was called “Reflective practice” and I joined a small group of clergy who likewise saw the benefit of having a group of people doing similar things within the church of England being able to meet with each other in honesty, trust and no threat of judgement to listen and engage with each other. As someone who was never brought up to talk about things this was a bit of a stretch of faith and of course trust in the process takes time to build but I’m sure it is doing me good. Likewise, our mid-week home group that meets every two weeks to discuss God’s word and great spiritual themes is always good, but it gets particularly interesting and helpful when our barriers come down and we feel free to share thoughts and ideas with each other that we wouldn’t otherwise do because we become comfortable with each other over time. Whilst the individual themes are the subject matter, I have come to feel that they are merely the catalyst for the real task of creating and deepening a sense of community. The root meaning of the word religion means to bind back together. Various of these groups exist across the RMC but it is something that I’d like to see expand so if anyone has a yen to join a group, offer a homely venue for a group or even feels moved to lead a group do contact me and we’ll build up a plan to bring some of us together.

The Prayer for today. At the school leavers service at All Saints church last week, the headmaster used this Irish blessing with which he blessed those leaving Drakes school and going onwards and upwards into the big wide world

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,

may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Love and peace,

Martin