

Dear friends,

Even though they are a large part of my work, I seldom speak about funerals but I am making an exception for the funeral of Christ Teuten last Tuesday at All Saints. I had visited Chris some time before he died to plan his funeral so we were sure it was exactly as he wanted it and the occasion was filled with people who knew and admired him. He was also a past church warden of the church he loved of course, and the congregational singing blew the roof off. A fitting tribute to a fine and gracious man.

The atmosphere at All Saints and Otterton on Sunday morning was also very special (with the most people at an All Saints Sunday communion since before the pandemic). Sometimes weeks pass by, and you can't remember a thing about them and then sometimes, just sometimes, the Spirit seems to move and fill everyone with a sense of expectation that fills one (well me, I suppose) with a sense that we have something so valuable in the RMC, something that cannot ever be allowed to be lost. After the services in the villages, it was back to St. Peter's for the Solo's lunch put on especially for people on their own. The atmosphere here is always good and Mandy and all the helpers need to be thanked.

Sunday 6th August – The Transfiguration

I will be presiding at St. Peter's at both morning services, Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at All Saints and John Archibald will preside at St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively.

Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14. As is pretty well-known, Jesus' favourite way of referring to himself was as "the son of man". What is less well known about this enigmatic phrase is that, while it refers to simply meaning a "human being" in Hebrew idiom (and this is how it is translated in our current NRSV version) Jesus is also referencing this mystical prophetic piece from Daniel as referring to himself. The one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven and to whom was given all dominion, glory and power.

2 Peter 1: 16-19. Peter refers directly to the mystical happening we call the Transfiguration in this letter. Peter was one of the inner circle along with James and John who experienced this mystical event when the sonship of Jesus Christ was confirmed before their very eyes. God's presence is symbolised by the cloud and out of the cloud the same words are used about Jesus as were used at his baptism experience. "This is my son, the beloved". It is Peter's personal experience of the event that is being relayed, not just some made up nonsense.

Luke 9: 28-36. While all the gospel accounts differ in minor details, all the main elements are there in Luke. The presence of Moses and Elijah, symbolising all the law and the prophets, are subordinated to Jesus as the preeminent revelation of God. In this event we see the meeting point between divinity and humanity. This is a major feast of the church which has always recognised the centrality of this event in the life of Jesus that sits alongside his baptism, crucifixion and resurrection in terms of its significance.

Otterton Summer Supper in Otterton Village Hall on Tuesday 8th August at 7pm.

Hot on the heels of their very successful fete that raised £903 last week, the church is holding their summer evening supper next Tuesday. Booking essential of course via church warden Anne who can be contacted on 01395 568059 but payment is on the night. Cost is £7 and all proceeds go to St. Michael's church.

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.

Fostering more groups within the RMC.

Further to what I wrote last week, we have had two offers of houses to host groups – both in Budleigh Salterton. If you have a yen to join a small group or indeed lead a small group to discuss spiritual things or read the Bible, or prayer, do get in contact with me.

Thought for the day.

Does emotion and religion mix very well? As Nicky Gumbel one joked on the Alpha course “Exuberant emotionalism isn't something the church of England has really ever had to worry about”. On the one hand you have the distasteful scenes (to me anyway) of Televangelists whipping up people into a frenzy, but that is mainly to squeeze money out of the gullible. But on the other hand, a completely emotionless service is dry and uninspiring – some

sort of emotional engagement is necessary to facilitate meaningful worship I feel. When God meets with us in worship he engages with the whole person, and we are complex multifaceted people so that involves reaching and touching our emotions as well as our minds. Worship is not a show of course, or cheap entertainment, and the regularity and formality of liturgy is meant to offer a safe comfortable space for any individual to find God in whatever emotional state they find themselves in. Symbols can speak louder than words of course, and over the centuries the church has cultivated many of them into our worship. Mood and tone speak to many of us in different ways – I am particularly drawn to the melancholic, for example and light-heartedness also has a place – used sparingly and with subtlety (a hard balance to get right all the time). A sense of expectancy that something may move you in some way is the right way to approach worship – if you don't expect anything you'll probably have your wish fulfilled. Forced jollity is a real turn off, for it has to come naturally if at all. The most emotional I have ever been in worship was in a communion service after a particularly inspiring talk by a young Anglo-catholic priest (Fr. Jacques Desrossiers where are you now I wonder) many years ago when he described the altar rail as a place of encounter with God and God was saying to us all – “I'll meet you there” and it was the most wonderful service in Aylesford Priory, and I approached the altar with tears in my eyes (which I could explain as a reaction to the incense!) and I met with God there – a private encounter in a very public and huge service.

The prayer for today was written by St. Thomas More.

**O Lord,
give us a mind that is humble, quiet, peaceable,
patient and charitable,
and a taste of your Holy Spirit
in all our thoughts, words and deeds.**

**O Lord,
give us a lively faith, a firm hope, a fervent charity,
a love of you.**

**Take from us all lukewarmness in meditation,
and all dullness in prayer.**

**Give us fervour and delight in thinking of you,
your grace, and your tender compassion toward us.**

**Give us, good Lord,
the grace to work for
the things we pray for.**

Amen.

Love and peace,
Martin