

Dear friends,

Last Sunday I was able to reminisce about visiting the tomb and Basilica of St. Thomas in Chennai, India. The occasion of course was the gospel reading of Thomas' meeting with Jesus having first expressed doubts. This enabled me to talk about faith and its relationship to doubt, which is perfectly normal. The true enemy of faith is not doubt but complete certainty, which of course negates the need for faith at all.

Lent course – Tonight (8th April) at 5pm.

Things got a little bit on top of us during Lent so we decided to finish the course tonight – I hope you didn't forget! I'll be there even if no-one else is! This final instalment in the Peter hall is titled "What are you looking for?" and is based on John 1: 29-42.

Sunday 14th April – Easter 3.

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's and Reverend Colin Randall will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively.

Acts 3: 12-19. Peter gives all the credit to God working through his son Jesus Christ for the working of the healing miracle. John writes about having faith in his name. Names are always given great significance in the bible and none more so than Jesus which is the Greek form of his actual name "Joshua" which literally means "God is Salvation".

1 John 3: 1-7. Our identity as followers and believers in Jesus is that we are "children of God". Jesus is our brother as are all people who also identify as a child of God. God has no favourites and shows no partiality which means that we are all equally loved and equally cared for by God.

Luke 24: 36-48. The resurrection defies adequate explanation – it is most aptly called a mystery. Whilst St. Paul puts his spiritual experience and hearing a disembodied voice on the same level as the resurrection appearances to the other apostles, great lengths are taken to describe this appearance as very physical indeed. Jesus eats a piece of broiled fish – very specific – in their presence so they could not mistake that he was a ghost. So Jesus was the same.....but different. Sometimes he could be recognised, sometimes not – he could appear in locked rooms and in different places at different times. He would appear in a blinding flash and a disembodied voice or as a physical body with a penchant for fish. Everything that happened on the third day onwards is mind blowing.

Music at St. Peter's

Two things to look out for this April.

First is the Spring concert on Saturday 20th April with the Exeter Temple Salvation Army Band and Songsters starting at 6.30pm. Admission is £10 and all proceeds go towards the upkeep of St. Peter's church.

Also we have a series of Sunday music concerts starting at 6pm hence the title Sundays at six. These concerts get under way on Sunday 28th April when we will be treated to a recital by Jean-Rene Andre the organist from Rennes cathedral in Brittany, France.

Thought for Today

We went to the Fairlynch museum in Budleigh on Friday because there was an exhibition about Otterton operating as a port many hundreds of years ago. It is terribly difficult to imagine Otterton as a harbour welcoming sea-going vessels nowadays but there you are – how things change! Of course, many other facts emerged (or I re-acquainted myself with). Otterton church was once a Benedictine Priory that was owned by the mother of King Harold. After the Norman conquest, William I gifted it to the monks of Mont-St-Michel in Normandy where it stayed until the dissolution of the monasteries. There were also lots of maps showing the whole of Budleigh Salterton as within the parish of All Saints East Budleigh and St. Peter's was a chapel of ease. St. Peter's was built in "the Lawn" in the 1860's and originally was meant to have a tower but we ran out of money and during WWII was hit by a bomb in 1943 - "rubble lay 15 feet deep inside the church". The three churches of the RMC span the ages from the 10th century to the present day and I know there have been keen rivalries between them. (It was joked that you needed a passport to pass from Otterton to East Budleigh in recent years) and the status and size of each has ebbed and flowed but through economic necessity we are all one now. St. Peter's, All Saints and St. Michael's have very different histories which now are becoming intertwined. Together we are strong and can build on our different personalities to make a resilient and stronger whole.

The Prayer for Today I have adapted the SPCK prayer and made it a prayer for the Raleigh Mission Community.

**Almighty God,
Who through the prophets of old
Promised that light would shine out of darkness.
Shine in our hearts and so use our endeavours in the R.M.C.
That many may be given the light of the knowledge of your glory
Which shone in the face of your son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Love and peace,
Martin