

Dear friends,

I hope everyone enjoyed and found significance in what occurred over the coronation weekend. Even if you aren't an ardent royalist (and I know there are many) there were many facets of the weekend that could resonate. One feature, aside from the anointing and crowning of Charles, was the central relationship between Charles and his son, who in his kiss on his Father's cheek during the service to his moving tribute to him during the coronation concert I found quite moving, especially as we know that other relationships within the Royal family are not quite as harmonious. And now I have a new boss of course as King Charles is now the supreme governor of the Church of England. I do know of course that Charles used to visit a monk at Mirfield called Fr. Harry Williams many years ago, so theologically I think I know what page Charles is on if he shares Harry's radical view of Christianity. On Sunday morning I substituted the last hymn for the National anthem at All Saints East Budleigh which felt right and at St. Peter's our coronation concert takes place on the 21st May at 6pm.

Sunday 14th May – Easter 6

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's this Sunday, Reverend Jean Burrows will be presiding at All Saints at 9.30am and reverend Chris Cant will be presiding at St. Michael's at 11am.

Acts 17: 22-31. In this famous incident Paul engages in a debate in the public square, and he starts by flattering his listeners on their religiosity mentioning their many shrines and even quoting one of their well-known poets who proclaim that we subsist in God "In him we live and move and have our being". Paul knows personally the God that one shrine declares as "unknown" and proclaims this God to the Athenians.

1 Peter 3: 13-22. Paul is putting into practice Peter's guidance to proclaim Christ with gentleness and reverence. If he or anyone suffers for doing so, remember it was Christ who suffered for doing right first, so you in excellent company. Peter also makes the statement that the risen Christ proclaims the gospel of salvation to all those people long dead, who disobeyed during the flood. God never abandons his offspring and never stops trying to save our souls. A wonderful thought for all people who worry about loved ones who never accepted the gospel in their lives. God will not abandon them.

John 14:15-21. The Spirit of truth – the Holy Spirit – the same Spirit that animates Jesus, Jesus will ask his Father to send to us to abide with us just as He abides in him. There is no systematic account of the doctrine of the

Holy Trinity in the New Testament, but all the elements are here in this section of John's gospel. Jesus talks again about mutual indwelling (verse 20) and the bonds of love inspired by the Spirit.

The retired clergy of Exeter Diocese. Not many people know that they have been meeting for their annual quiet day and Eucharist at All Saints for a few years now because in their own words we are always open, friendly and helpful. We are honoured to again host them and I am equally honoured to have presided at their Eucharist yesterday.

Thought for the Day.

I presided at two funerals last week of two stalwarts of St. Peter's – Stuart Yerrell and Gillian Andrews. It was after Gillian's funeral on Thursday that I came home and started to feel a bit weird. My heart was racing and I felt a bit off. When Louise returned from her clinic she got me to the health centre to have an ECG, and indeed I had a fast and irregular heartbeat. The doctor recommended that I attend A & E so we dutifully trundled off to Exeter arriving at about 7.15. Triage happened in about an hour and a quarter, but then we had to wait....and wait. At 3.30am we decided that it was better to just come home as there was no sign of any doctor being available. For a lay person, having a problem with your heart is a massive worry and it makes you think and consider things in a slightly new perspective, so much thinking has been going on. I am a natural worrier, like so many of us, and it is like times like this when the rubber hits the road that you discover the content of your beliefs. I am safe and secure (despite my constant anxiety!) that I believe and embrace a gospel of universal love that informs me that no matter what happens, all is well and all will be well.

I am ending with a poem that is also a prayer if prayer is understood as growing in communion with God and his creatures. I met Karen Harrison when I was a priest of the Anglican church in Sofia, Bulgaria. We have kept in contact through many episodes of illness and foreign travels over the years and Karen is still writing poetry and is now living in Calgary Canada.

No woman is an island

**Fewer and fewer
of the people I meet
are total strangers to me,
even if we've never set
eyes on each other before.**

**I recognise something
in every one of them:
a striving, a confusion, a fear, a joy,
a choice, or the inability to make one,
a shadow, sunlight.**

**With every year
every stranger becomes less
strange, less remote,
by a geologic process of time.**

**With every year
I am flowing closer to shore,
less distance, less distinct,
subducted on humanity.**

Closer to the warmth of the earth's core.

Love and peace,
Martin