

Dear friends,

The men's singles final started at two. The civic service at St. Peter's started at three. It was a lovely service which was enjoyed by all who participated but how much tennis would I miss? I needn't have worried because the absolutely enthralling match went on until about 7pm. so everybody was happy!

**It was** a busy weekend with a wedding blessing on Friday, our Garden party on Saturday, Two Sunday morning services, a Civic service yesterday afternoon and a wedding planning meeting with a young couple as well, but everything happened and went off very well indeed.

## Sunday 23rd July – 7 after Trinity – Proper 11

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's. Rev. Jean Burrows will be giving a presentation about her forthcoming trip to Tanzania at the 10am service. The postponed St. Peter's patronal BBQ will take place immediately afterwards. Rev. Margaret Scrivener will be presiding at All Saints at the 9.30 service and Rev. Chris Cant will be presiding at St. Michael's at 11am.

**Wisdom of Solomon 12:13, 16-19.** It is good to have a reading from the Apocrypha occasionally. The theme of the reading is that God is sovereign and does not need to justify himself to any other god because they don't exist. Mercy should not be seen as a sign of weakness but comes from his strength, and followers of God who are strong should temper their own strength with mercy likewise.

**Romans 8: 12-25.** The early verses of this lection have unfortunately led to a tradition that views all bodily functions (especially sexual ones) as being somehow dirty. But it is better to see what Paul wrote as contrasting all actions as being under the power of sin with one empowered by the spirit of God. A Spirit of "sonship" which leads to us all seeing ourselves as children of God. What Paul goes on to say challenges any version of the gospel that restricts redemption to just humanity. The whole of creation is being redeemed.

**Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43.** This parable that draws characteristically sharp lines between good and evil types is typically Matthean and indeed appears only in Matthew's gospel. It is ambivalent though and appears to say that who is good and who is evil may not be very apparent so it is safer

to leave them all growing together when God will ultimately decide at the final judgement who is a child of God and who is a child of the Devil.

## Thought for the day.

I think it is good and healthy to be quite sceptical about nearly everything especially all the current cause celebres currently in vogue in our society. From climate change to race, to sexuality and gender on both sides of the culture wars. I am a natural sceptic and try to maintain a dignified silence when I hear people pronouncing about this that or the other from either side of the argument. I tend to take the long view expressed by chairman Mao when he was asked about the effects of the French revolution (1789) on the world. "Too early to say" was the reply. I am also very cautious when I hear Bishops or Archbishops in the church of England say something monumentally silly. Perhaps I misheard or misunderstood the nuances or perhaps they were wilfully mis-reported. I tend to give the benefit of the doubt until I get definitive proof that they are indeed very silly indeed. Whenever you hear of anything that disturbs you, emanating from an Anglican Bishop, be assured that I will probably just ignore it so nothing will change on my watch if I have anything to do with it. I also have quite a firm attachment to "natural law" which maintains that certain things are true in all places in all times independent of what religion (or none) you follow. The transient whims and obsessions of certain sections of society often seem to overwhelm us but the advantage we have in our churches is that we have the perspective of age and wisdom. We've seen it all before. Things will come and things will go but God remains in his heaven, and all is well with the world – despite what we hear on the news and read in the newspapers. Don't panic because despite what you may be led to believe, common sense is not quite dead yet.

**The Prayer for Today** is by a seminal Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm (1033 – 1109)

**O Lord my God,  
Teach my heart where and how to seek you,  
Where and how to find you.  
Lord if you are not here but absent,  
Where shall I seek you?  
But you are everywhere, so you must be here,  
Why then do I not seek you?  
Lord, I am not trying to make my way to your height,  
For my understanding is in no way equal to that,  
But I do desire to understand a little of your truth**

**Which my heart already believes and loves.  
I do not seek to understand so that I may believe,  
But I believe so that I may understand;  
And what is more,  
I believe that unless I do believe I shall not understand.**

Love and peace,  
Martin