

Dear friends,

The sun has got his hat on hip hip hip hooray! As someone whose mood is really affected by the weather I've been struggling with the constant leaden skies, wind and rain. But Bank holiday Monday was a glorious day, with a long walk in just a tee shirt (unthinkable just a day earlier), an exciting snooker final on the TV and an opportunity to just rest. This is how a bank holiday should be. Now of course, looking forward to the coronation weekend we have threats of a return to cloud and rain – I do hope not. Of course, this reminds me of one of the most misquoted verses in the Bible, when I hear people say that “the sun shines on the righteous” (Matthew 5: 45) which makes the verse say exactly the opposite of what it actually says which is “The sun shines on the righteous and the unrighteous” meaning that God's love is indiscriminate.

Sunday 7th May – 5th of Easter

Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at both services at St. Peter's, and I will be presiding at All Saints at 9.30 am (followed by a swift APCM) and Mr John Archibald will be presiding at St. Michael's at 11am.

Acts 7: 55-60. St. Paul, or Saul as he was also known hated the new church, because it threatened everything he knew and held dear – the Jewish religion. He wanted to destroy it and here we have him presiding over the murder of the very first Christian martyr, St. Stephen. Stephen has a vision of Jesus sitting at the right hand of God which infuriates the crowd and they stone him but Stephen follows the example of Jesus by asking God not to hold this against them.

1 Peter 2: 2-10. Seek to grow in Christ says St. Peter, and then he tells us exactly why we should in beautiful imagery that have fired the imagination ever since. We are indeed children of God as proclaimed by John and we are not only living in God's household but the walls of this house are our own flesh and blood. A spiritual kingdom composed by flesh and blood. We, the church community are to be temples of the Holy spirit just as Jesus was.

John 14: 1-14. Jaw dropping theology containing probably the greatest description of divinity that Jesus himself ever uttered. “I am the way the truth and the life” and the even more explicit “I and the Father are one”. If you have seen me, you are also looking at the Father – quite earth shatteringly complex and mysterious.

St. Peter's Giving Day – 13th May – 10am till 1pm

This has been a difficult five-year spell for all churches and Saint Peter's is no exception, with the covid disruption and the recent cost of living crisis. It has caused us significant financial problems. Of course, the favoured method of giving is a Direct debit which ensures a steady regular monthly income, but I do know that there are many very generous people who are both willing and able to support their church with one off payments. On the 13th May I will be in church with our treasurer and other wardens who will be there to gratefully receive any offering that you can afford to give – either one off payments or direct debits.

Thought for the Day

“I am the way that you should be following, I contain all that is true in all creation and I am the source of all life.” I remind myself of that statement made by a Jewish carpenter in 1st century Palestine every time I am tempted to underplay the mysterious, mystical revelation that Jesus the Christ made to the world at large. If we are to be like him, follow him, share in his sufferings, share in his resurrection, we can only do that if we share something of the divine within each and every one of us. In John 17, the statement in John 14 “I and the Father are one” is expanded to include all of us and Jesus exhorts us all to realise that we are all one with each other with Christ living in us. This cosmic vision is so at odds with modern secular utilitarianism that it is in constant danger of being thought as being so farfetched as to be ridiculous. And indeed, most of the Western world now seems to believe just that, but to those who are being saved – who accept and know the salvation of God, it is the power of life itself, hidden in every atom of every bit of this God-created universe. The hidden hand behind your life and within your life. Growing into this realisation takes a lot of faith, effort and time and that is reflected in our prayer for Today.

The Prayer for Today was written by the French mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Patient Trust

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages.

We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

**And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability—
and that it may take a very long time.
And so I think it is with you;
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on,
as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.
Only God could say what this new spirit
gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing
that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.**

Love and peace,
Martin