

Dear friends,

The death of the Duke of Edinburgh

The death yesterday of Prince Philip came as a shock yesterday. He was 99 years old and he married the then Princess Elizabeth in 1947, their long 74 year marriage was an example to us all. One of the most recognisable faces in the world, my heart goes out to Queen Elizabeth who must be feeling bereft right now. I can only hope and pray that her solid Christian faith sustains her in her hour of need. The Church of England has prepared an on-line book of condolence and a virtual candle <https://www.churchofengland.org/> as live books of condolences were deemed inappropriate at this time.

Bishop Robert has also provided this statement and prayer. <https://vimeo.com/534832690>

Holy Week, good Friday and Easter Sunday were special, spiritual and meaningful for me and according to the feedback I have received they were very meaningful for a whole lot of other people as well. I knew things were getting back to normal when 25 people turned up for the Maunday Thursday Compline service, then over 50 for our “Good Friday reflections”, which set up the over 120 people who came to the Easter Sunday Services over which I presided. I have been told that at All Saints and St. Michael’s there were bumper crops as well. Thank you everyone across the RMC who contributed in whatever capacity you serve, and it was especially lovely to hear the choir again after a long lay-off.

Lucinda has recorded the Easter Sunday service at St. Peter’s which is now available on our website homepage and you can access it here by clicking on this link. <https://youtu.be/X-bfaL8reK0>

Sunday 11th April – 2nd of Easter

Acts 4: 32-35. A highly idealised view of what the church may have looked like in the first few weeks after the resurrection but it obviously didn’t catch on and this form of community life is only practised, even half closely, in Monasteries and convents nowadays. Though note that if we take Luke literally the charity only extended to fellow Christians. A more modified generosity and charitable frame of mind is now the norm based on the understanding that we are all made in the image of God.

1 John 1:1 – 2:2. We live in a world far removed from the understanding that animal sacrifices atone for anything, but if we understand sacrifice as a free will self-offering to God as a gift (The original impetus) and understand that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:19 we shuffle closer to the full import of the cross for Christians which John concludes was for the “whole world”.

John 20: 19-31. There is no need to wear Lucan glasses and see this giving of the Spirit as some kind of prelude to Pentecost. For John this is an equivalent story and is reminiscent of God breathing the breath of life into Adam in Genesis. The episode with Thomas is to illustrate the nature of resurrection faith. Thomas says he will only believe when he can see and touch Jesus’ wounds but when given the chance to do so, he acknowledges Jesus as his “Lord and God” before actually doing so. Jesus then blesses all people who will do the same thing, believe without seeing.

I have recorded a YouTube reflection on these readings which you can access by clicking on this link <https://youtu.be/7D7FDAaBjWQ>

Alternatively, if you’d prefer to read it you can do so on my Blog here. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2021/04/learning-from-experience-bathed-in.html>

As nearly all people have now returned to church now at East Budleigh it has been decided to end the live-streaming at the end of April. However, until then, this is the link for this Sunday’s service. <https://app.faith.online/p/events/GNU13wbV>

Psalm 133 – A Psalm for the church family
The Blessedness of Unity
A Song of Ascents.

- 1 How very good and pleasant it is
when a family lives together in unity!
- 2 It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down over the collar of his robes.
- 3 It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion.

For there the Lord ordained his blessing,
life for evermore.

The prayer for Today is from the Church of England issued on the death of his highness, Prince Philip.

God of our lives, we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip, for his love of our country, and for his devotion to duty.

We entrust him now to your love and mercy, through our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen.

Merciful God, be close to all who mourn, especially The Queen and all members of the Royal Family.

May they know the comfort of your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal God, we give thanks for the life of Prince Philip, founder of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

We remember his vision and imagination,

his interest in young people and his support for them.

Inspire us with the same commitment to serve friend, neighbour, and stranger alike, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Love and peace,
Martin

Please note my new email address is vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk