

Dear friends,

One of the highlights of Sunday morning (apart from communing with the Lord obviously) was the privilege of awarding to Chris Parrish, on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday a special award in recognition of his unstinting and innovative service to St. Peter's church over the last 24 years. He and Janet, who died last year of course have been, and are, a "rock" of our church who St. Peter himself is proud I'm sure. The citation and medal was the "Order of St. Peter's".



## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February – Sunday before Lent

I shall be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at the 9.30 and 11.00 services and the Venerable Trevor Jones will preside at the 8am and 10am at St. Peter's.

**2 Kings 2: 1-12.** The “double portion” of Elijah's Spirit asked for by Elisha isn't a selfish request. A double portion usually in Hebrew means the two thirds of the estate inherited by the elder son so Elisha is actually asking to be Elijah's heir or successor. The only two people in the Bible not to die are Enoch (Gen. 5.24) and Elijah, which obviously fed the belief that Elijah would return to make a straight path for the messiah.

**2 Corinthians 4: 3-6.** Light is a natural symbol of revelation but for many people they can't see that light and the truth remains veiled. Before we get too judgemental here we need to remember that Paul himself knew enough about Jesus to attack his followers originally. He too was veiled and it took a massive mysterious vision to shake him out of his original assessment and cause the scales to fall from his eyes.

**Mark 9: 2-9.** The transfiguration of Jesus is an event without parallel in the gospels and reveals to James and John that Jesus is not one of three people – Moses and Elijah being the other two, but he is above them and exceeds them in every way. In this revelation of God, the Father speaks out of the cloud (denoting the divine presence) and repeats the words heard at his baptism “This is my son, the beloved” and adds “Listen to him!”. Faith in Jesus exceeds all other kinds of faith.

## Lent.

**Ash Wednesday** is the **17<sup>th</sup> February** and to mark the start of Lent we shall utilise the existing 9.30am BCP communion service at St. Peter's to mark the occasion for the whole RMC. This year everything is different of course and there will be no “Ash” applied to anyone's forehead. There is also no joint services or reflections as in past years either but what I have done is order 30 copies of a Lent course by Fr. Eric Simmons CR, a Mirfield Father, called “How to be a missionary”.

Fr. Eric died this week so in tribute to him I ordered the pamphlets and will leave them in the three churches for anyone who wants them to pick them up and use them as a gift from me.

Holy Week may still seem a way off yet of course (and everything is still uncertain) but I shall definitely preside at Compline services in Holy week on the 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March at 7pm in the evening, again at St. Peter's.

## Covid-19 Vaccine fraud

**Be aware!** My daughter Claire alerted me to a notice from the Government warning us that despicable people are using even the vaccination as a way to con and defraud people. Be aware that the NHS  
Will NEVER ask for payment – the vaccine is free  
Will NEVER ask for your bank details  
Will NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine  
Will NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending them copies of personal documents such as your passport

## Musical interlude!

I love this soothing calming and positive song by Bob Marley. Don't worry about a thing, Just enjoy. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LanCLS\\_hlo4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LanCLS_hlo4)

## Thought for the day.

Dreaming of foreign holidays is how I spend a lot of my free time nowadays or contemplating whether to learn how to play the rather expensive piano we bought in Newcastle a few years ago. My first attempt at playing, whilst living in Gainford, County Durham was brought to a halt by the move to Newcastle and pressure of work but now I think it is down to sheer laziness because the task seems so gargantuan. I tried to learn to play the guitar once, an effort that went no-where and I fret because I don't have any hobbies to speak of. I love walking and Yoga keeps me trim but I don't consider them hobbies. I'd love to master a hobby that was truly artistic, creative and practical – that had an end product – but to be honest I'd settle for something that was creative and not particularly practical as well actually. I get tired and bored by staring at screens so much and I confided to our Archdeacon just recently that I didn't have any hobbies and he just laughed and said that neither did he. I will be praying to God that he reveals to me something that will get my attention. But there is a time and a place for everything I suppose and ploughing God's acre is an all-consuming passion and has been for the last twenty years, so perhaps my interest will be piqued and I will find my metier only when I have to and I lay my stole down. Until that day, I know that God works through his children and I am as I am, just as you are who you are, and God's wisdom rejoices in the human race in all our diversity, likes, dislikes and gifts that we

bring to the table and as we walk with him through our life, we put our trust in him.

**My prayer for today** is the poem "God knows" by Minnie Haskins

**'God Knows'**

**And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:**

**"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."**

**And he replied:**

**"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.**

**That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."**

**So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.**

**And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.**

**So heart be still:**

**What need our little life**

**Our human life to know,**

**If God hath comprehension?**

**In all the dizzy strife**

**Of things both high and low,**

**God hideth His intention.**

**God knows. His will**

**Is best. The stretch of years**

**Which wind ahead, so dim**

**To our imperfect vision,**

**Are clear to God. Our fears**

**Are premature; In Him,**

**All time hath full provision.**

**Then rest: until**

**God moves to lift the veil**

**From our impatient eyes,**

**When, as the sweeter features**

**Of Life's stern face we hail,**

**Fair beyond all surmise**

**God's thought around His creatures**

**Our mind shall fill.**

Love and peace,

Martin