

Dear friends,

I have recorded a YouTube video based on the readings set for the Sunday before Lent that I have called "I've seen the light" and you can watch it by clicking on this link. <https://youtu.be/fC706GNotHo>

Alternatively, if you'd prefer to read it you can access it via my Blog here. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2021/02/ive-seen-light.html>



The laughing Christ – An image from Latin America

Do you ever imagine Jesus laughing? As a rounded human being of course he would have laughed but we most often imagine him (at least I do) as a rather sober, serious, nay even sombre figure – all calm and monk-like. But where does that image come from? The gospels attest that Jesus was perceived as a “glutton and a drunkard” by some – the antithesis of the austere figure of John the Baptist and his habit of eating and drinking with tax collectors and prostitutes scandalised respectable society of his day. This figure of the laughing Christ comes from the poor communities of Latin America and says that even in the midst of poverty and oppression there can be joy. Festivals and ceremonies don't ignore current troubles or past indignities but celebrate future possibilities. It is that sense of joy and anticipation that confounds powerful people when confronted by the laughter of the dirt poor. That the impoverished can weep is what we expect, but how do the powerful account for their laughter. Perhaps because that innate hope for change the laughter embodies is what frightens people?

Live stream link for Sunday All Saints service

The Live Stream link this week is <https://app.faith.online/p/events/klxjDLPMb>
The phone number as usual is 01395 891035.

Another scam

I thought you might be interested to know that there is yet another scam doing the rounds which are recorded messages purporting to be from the National crime agency telling people they are blocking their National insurance numbers. Just hang up. Be an innocent as doves and as wise as serpents!

The Prayer for today is for all those who sometimes cannot pray but also perceives divinity speaking through the stuff of life which is as it should be. A poem by Carol Ann Duffy called simply “Prayer”.

**Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer
utters itself. So, a woman will lift
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.**

**Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth
in the distant Latin chanting of a train.**

**Pray for us now. Grade 1 piano scales
console the lodger looking out across
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls
a child's name as though they named their loss.**

**Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer -
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.**

Love and peace,
Martin

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