

Dear friends,

The shops are opening, many more people are back in church, the sun is shining (at the moment!) and we had a lovely long walk on Dartmoor. We've also taken a chance and booked a foreign holiday for later in the year. Time will tell how wise a decision that was! We are equal at scrabble - 466 all – and second vaccination jabs are imminent. Bolstered too by a wonderful Holy week and Easter, the pall that has been covering our lives this past twelve months is being pulled back slowly but surely.

The death of Prince Phillip of course reminds us all, just in case we needed a reminder, that all physical life is finite in its present forms and that the mortality rate for human beings is 100%. The Queen, however exalted a position she holds is still a human being and will be grieving now just as all people who have lost a loved one have grieved but not everyone has the comfort of a faith and trust in a loving God as Queen Elizabeth does. I hope and pray that her faith, so evident over the course of her life, will continue to give her peace.

Sunday 18th April – Easter 3

I will be presiding at St. Peter's this Sunday and the reverend Karen Young will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's.

Acts 3: 12-19. In this speech given to the witnesses to the healing of a lame man, Peter attributes the healing to the name of Jesus whom he calls "the author of Life" and places Jesus firmly within the Jewish revelation. Jesus is the glorious servant of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is the author of life alone that has the power and authority to give, sustain and restore fullness of life.

1 John 3: 1-7. John here appears to contradict himself with purporting to uphold the sinlessness of believers when he had already said in chapter 1 verse 8. "Those who say they have no sin deceive themselves". You could say that what we have is the reality of the situation clashing headlong with the aspiration that we are all automatically perfected. But of course, while we all sin, our righteousness is "reckoned to us" by God – declared righteous even when we are not as Paul says in Romans 4.

Luke 24:36-48. Luke is not interested in Paul's assertions of "spiritual bodies" (1 Corinthians 15:4) and asserts in accordance with classic Jewish thought that the resurrection is very physical. Our whole created selves are

raised in a very physical new earth. That juxtaposition only serves to deepen the mystery of the resurrection. The risen Jesus of course subsequently does vanish. Trust that the author of life cannot die, and in whatever form it takes, we are also raised – we are risen indeed.

Thought for the day

My spiritual director said to me this week “when you are feeling down find solace in the psalms” and when I saw the psalm (number 4) set for this Sunday it spoke directly to my heart as things sometimes do. I’m sure everyone has had the experience of reading something familiar, perhaps for the umpteenth time and yet suddenly being struck by something or noticing something as if for the first time. This happens a lot when reading the scriptures. Unscheduled moments of insight and recognition. This happened to me on reading psalm four. It is as if God is speaking directly to your heart by his Spirit. I’m sure many can attest to that experience.

Psalm 4

- ¹ Answer me when I call, O God of my right!
You gave me room when I was in distress.
Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.
- ² How long, you people, shall my honour suffer shame?
How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies? *Selah*
- ³ But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself;
the Lord hears when I call to him.
- ⁴ When you are disturbed,^[a] do not sin;
ponder it on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*
- ⁵ Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the Lord.
- ⁶ There are many who say, ‘O that we might see some good!
Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord!’
- ⁷ You have put gladness in my heart
more than when their grain and wine abound.
- ⁸ I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.

The prayer for today. French theologian and mystic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s writings were often complex but this prayer is perfectly straightforward.

**Grant me to recognise in others Lord God
The radiance of your own face
Amen**

Love and peace,
Martin

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