

Dear friends,

Greetings everybody! We had a refreshing two week break, with plenty of good local walks and it feels good to be back in the fray. I eased myself in to my first day by recording an assembly for St. Peter's school, writing a piece for the parish magazines, two deanery meetings and planning a Good Friday reflective service and preparing for two funerals. O Happy day!

I re-enter with just two weeks to go before Palm Sunday and Holy week so it seems an opportune time to advertise what is happening in Holy Week.

## Holy Week

There will be a **7pm compline service** every night Monday 29th March through to Thursday 1st April and **at 3pm on Good Friday I will preside at a Good Friday reflective service.** These will all take place in St. Peter's for the whole RMC. Easter day services will be at the normal times in each church. (The only change there will be that as it is Easter Sunday Otterton will also have a Eucharist and their first of the month "service of the word" will happen on the 11th April courtesy of John Archibald)

## Sunday 21st March – The fifth Sunday of Lent

This Sunday I will preside at the 8am and 10am services at St. Peter's and the reverend Karen Young will preside at the 9.30 and 11am services at All Saints and St. Michael's respectively.

**Jeremiah 31:31-34.** Jeremiah looks forward to a new covenant (an agreement between God and his people) that is better than the agreement that the Israelites broke. This law would be written on our hearts and all would know God. But in the cold light of day have we really been any better at following the law of love than the Israelites were? This is more like a precious hope that all mankind will love what God commands and desire what he promises, a state of union only really ever fulfilled in Jesus Christ himself

**Hebrews 5: 5-10.** Any high priest has to be chosen and anointed, be able to empathise with human weakness and represent humanity before God and his role is to offer sacrifice. This is all based on the original model of priesthood of Aaron. The once for all nature of a more perfect priesthood is derived from the example of Melchizadek, who is superior because he blesses Abraham the progenitor of all God's people. Because he is chosen and anointed by God, fully identified with those he represents through suffering, He is able to offer the one perfect sacrifice for the salvation of all.

**John 12:20-33.** The hour of confrontation with the world has come. Only those who are willing to give everything up can see eternal life. Unselfish sacrificial living isn't about denying or destroying yourself, it is about discovering your true self – the part that looks like God and living out of that consciousness. I take this to mean that people closest to the divine in this life see the truth much more clearly than others. This passage ends with Jesus proclaiming that when he rises from the dead he will draw "all people" to himself.

## Seeing yourself as God sees you.

Apparently there is a Jewish proverb that goes "Before every person there marches an angel proclaiming "Behold, the image of God"

## Thought for the day

I think the most attractive personality trait that I prize more than any other is integrity. A person who acts with honesty and honour and truthfulness at all times, no matter who is watching is worthy of respect and allows one to be completely at ease with them because they engender trust. It also carries the meaning of wholeness and completeness and therefore has a close connection with our notion of salvation.

Jesus as a human being, you could say, embodied integrity because his honesty was so evident that many people instinctively trusted him. Trust in God is what is required of Christians I think as belief doesn't quite cut it. As James says in his letter, "you believe in God – Good , so does the devil" (2:19), so believing does not necessarily entail trusting God which then leads to following God. And as we know, that's what Jesus wanted us to do – follow him.

**The prayer for Today** is just so pertinent and lovely

**Spirit of truth,**

**Give me the strength and courage**

**to act and speak with integrity.**

**Help me to be honest and truthful**

**As I carry out my roles and responsibilities.**

**May I strive to be one who holds fast to**

**The inner compass of conscience**

**Thereby holding to my promises and commitments.**

**Guide me in all my ways**

**And let me walk each day in integrity**

Love and peace,

Martin

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