

Dear friends,

A poignant weekend for us all. I was prepared for Remembrance Sunday by the parish walk around Otterton on Saturday visiting 17 finger posts each bearing the name of one of the fallen on the Otterton war memorial and at each one Jane Bennett gave a profile of the soldier. About thirty of us made the ten mile walk which really made us think about the personal tragedy of war before the church service and Remembrance Day service at the war memorial in East Budleigh the next day. It seems that a lot more people are coming to these commemorations nowadays and about 90 people turned up to pay their respects. The same was true at Otterton and Budleigh Salterton. The evening was brought to a wonderful close by Choral Evensong at St. Peter's and gorgeous and reflective singing by the choir (if not the cantor!).

## Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November – Christ the King

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's, Reverend Margaret Scrivener is presiding at All Saints and Fr. Peter is presiding at St. Michael's.

**Daniel 7: 9-10, 13-14.** The “Son of man” which simply means a human being in Hebrew idiom was Jesus' favourite term for referring to himself. It was not a phrase chosen at random however. It refers back to this passage in Daniel when God – the ancient of days – anoints his earthly King and bestows on him an everlasting Kingdom.

**Revelation 1: 4-8.** The imagery in Revelation also draws heavily on the imagery in Daniel. “The clouds of heaven” always reference the divine presence and his eternal kingship. To be pronounced Lord and King, a title which was extended to the Christ, would have reverberated in the hearts of the original readers because if written during the reign of Domitian he required people to address him as “our Lord and our God”, so a direct challenge to Rome. The eternal Kingship of “he who is” is made clear in the evocative description of God being beyond historical time as “The Alpha and the Omega”.

**John 18: 33-37.** When Jesus is brought before Pilate, he acknowledges, if obliquely his identity as a King by answering the direct question with “You say that I am”. Pilate's understanding of what makes a King and Jesus assuming the kingship described in Daniel and John are vastly different and not to be confused.

## Anniversary of Alex's death

This morning I was reminded via my on-line diary that it is the anniversary of my first wife's death in 2010 aged just 49. It is one of those things that doesn't dominate your thinking at all (and only church members from Margate, Romania, Gainford and Winston will have met her) but it marked the most profound change in our family's life. Claire lost her mother and I lost my wife. But what I can say is that the personal experience of death changed me completely as a person and a Christian and made me the person I am today.

## The wine tasting

That was held in the Peter Hall on Friday evening was a joy. Louise's mum and dad were with us and we spent a very convivial evening tasting wines and spirits described by four agents who work with James Findlay. There must have been about forty different wines and spirits to taste so you had to pick and choose carefully which ones you wanted to try, but we now have our Christmas drinks sorted! About £700 for raised for St. Peter's into the bargain.

## Colaton Raleigh Walk

Don't forget that next Sunday afternoon we are walking (or simply arriving) at Colaton Raleigh village Hall at 3pm as before, but this time we will be met by Mulled Wine and minced pies!

## Louise Prideaux

On Monday I was introduced to an ordinand (a trainee vicar) who is coming to the RMC on a short placement before Christmas. There are various things she needs to experience including preaching at a service (and getting feedback), leading one act of worship, leading a Bible study, attending church committees, experience a funeral visit etc... I will introduce her at all the three churches when she is able to attend and try to not put her off parish ministry completely if I can. I will introduce her to St. Peter's on Sunday 10am service. Make her feel welcome at coffee afterwards!

## Philip Ringrose

We said a final goodbye to one of our own on Monday. There was no family present at his funeral but about 90 friends and congregation of St. Peter's turned up to his funeral and it was a fitting farewell to a devout man who obviously had a big impact on people.

## Thought for the day

Storm clouds are gathering all over the world as we gathered to commemorate our fallen victims of war. Russia is massing troops on its border with Ukraine, refugees are camped on the borders of Poland and Belarus and Lithuania, China looks like preparing to invade Taiwan, the Serbs in Bosnia are wanting to form their own self-governing enclave (with Russian backing) possibly provoking a resumption of the war in the Balkans and worst of all there may be a shortage of pigs in blankets this Christmas. That last phrase I wrote in jest obviously, but it is remarkable how minor irritations that are close to us often loom larger in our imaginations than huge events that seem so far away. Except that nothing in this modern world is very far away. We are so interconnected that what happens in the South China Sea, for example, will affect all manner of things almost immediately. As I commented just recently on the role of the media, it is all too easy to exist in a permanent state of fear and unrest and let things get on top of us. One of the primary roles of any religion is that it gives us a sense of perspective, a sense of our place in the world, and mechanisms for dealing with life's ups and downs. The feast of Christ the King reinforces that central idea that all of life's dangers and problems are subservient to an overarching idea of a divine order where all things will be put right, all fears, sufferings and death will be no more and goodness truth and beauty will triumph.

## The Prayer for Today is by George Appleton

**Grant us to look with your eyes of compassion  
O merciful God, at the long trail of mankind.  
The wars, the hungry millions,  
The countless refugees  
The natural disasters,  
The cruel and needless deaths,  
Men's inhumanity to one another,  
The heartbreak and hopelessness of so many lives.  
Hasten the coming of the Messianic age  
When the nations shall be at peace  
And men shall live free from fear and free from want,  
And there shall be no more pain or tears,  
In the security of your will,  
The assurance of your love,  
The coming of your kingdom,  
O God of righteousness, O Lord of compassion.**

Love and peace,  
Martin