

Dear friends,

The Ascension Day service at St. Michael's was a lovely occasion, an integral part of the story of death, resurrection, ascension, and the giving of the Spirit. I was really frugal with the incense, not wanting to upset anyone but ironically the only comments I received was that some people actually wanted much more incense – I'll bear that in mind for Ascension next year.

On Sunday, the seventh of Easter I spoke about being both religious and spiritual and if you'd like to hear what I said I have recorded as usual a YouTube video which is available by clicking on this link. <https://youtu.be/P7osCX02TU8>

Alternatively, if you'd prefer to read it you can do so here by clicking on this link to my Blog. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2021/05/happy-to-be-religious.html>

**There** won't be an email next Wednesday as Louise and I are taking a short break in West Devon (There be dragons!)

## **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – Pentecost**

I will presiding at the 8am and 10am services at St. Peter's again this Sunday before going to Otterton to chair their APCM meeting. And Margaret Scrivener will be presiding at 9.30am All Saints service and Chris Cant at the St. Michael's. 11am service

**Acts 2: 1-21.** All the stops are pulled out to try and convey the fact of sudden, unmerited, irresistible new life - The rush of a mighty wind, tongues of fire alighting on people's heads and transformed speech. Pentecost is the Jewish feast of weeks which is both a harvest festival and also a time Jews celebrated the reviewing of the Covenant with God. Thus, Pentecost/weeks is a special pregnant moment in the relationship between people and God. No one is excluded and the message is new life for the church, new life for individuals through the Spirit of God.

**Romans 8: 22-27.** Paul adopts a cosmic perspective in this piece of his letter. The new age has dawned for all creation but we are all existing in Paul's emphasis between the inauguration of the kingdom and its future final consummation. But faith in that future hope allows us to bear with endurance

the trials of the present age – looking forward to future glory – a hope that encompasses the whole of the created order.

**John 15:26-27, 16: 4-15.** The presence of the Spirit, defending us when challenged, guiding us when perplexed, and revealing more and more the truth of God, makes up for the physical absence of Jesus and also enables us to see him as he really is – the son of God, a continuing revelation of the living God.

**The lighter side!** Courtesy of Mike in Gainford.

An elderly and much-loved family pet died.

The mother was trying to explain death and loss to her young children.

. . . " but Mum, how can he have gone to a better place? . . . We are already in Yorkshire "

**The RMC Garden party – 26<sup>th</sup> June at 3.30:**

Just to note that Mary Leat has kindly offered to coordinate the food so originally we were just going to have cake but people understandably would like savoury as well, so any offers please make through Mary

**Thought for the day.**

Being open to the spirit means being open to being moulded by and learning from the chances and changes of life. I see a pattern in my life that is trying to mould me into a more rounded person while keeping my eyes on God. Sandgate, Mirfield, Margate, Bucharest, Gainford and Winston, Tynemouth and now East Devon have all been essential and integral to forming my beliefs and attitudes and expectations in terms of religious belief and practice and my long and varied experiences of the richness of life are all of a piece. Dockyard Electrician, Jewellery shop in Dalston, Royal Navy, unemployment, warehouse labourer, travel operative, and punctuated by experiences of death and despair, and corruption and vice in some situations.

Underlying all this was a commitment to truth, honesty and straight dealing that were the values that were instilled in me by my parents and have been a hallmark of my life extending far beyond my adoption of the Christian faith in my mid-thirties.

God was with me before I was conscious of his existence. The fancy term for that is called Prevenient Grace and the belief that God always goes before us is why the traditional churches have always baptised infants. God has been

preparing me to become the person he wants me to be. This is true for every one of us.

Our whole lives in their entirety are the clay that the Father works in and through to help us realise the truth about life and our place within it. A congregation is a mighty conglomerate of a zillion different experiences and capabilities. I firmly believe that within every congregation there is all the talent and potential to thrive that we need and be a positive force for good in the world. Every church and individual within those churches should stand tall as we come out of lockdown, saying to themselves that we are able, we are competent, and we have all the resources we need to face the world with confidence.

**The prayer for Today** is by Christopher Idle

**Eternal God, keep your chosen people  
True to their ancient calling,  
Alive to their present opportunity,  
And confident of their glorious inheritance;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Love and peace,  
Martin

Please note my new email address is [vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk](mailto:vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk)