

Dear friends,

Our longest walk to date was from our front doorstep. A long round trip up to Newton Poppleford up to peak hill and Mutters Moor, Ladram Bay, Otterton (including a swift pint in the Kings Arms) and home. About 12 miles I think but as well as tremendous views we came across this seat up above Newton Poppleford on Bulverton Hill dedicated to John Keble – he of Keble college Oxford fame. This was a favourite walk of his. John Keble was a theologian and high churchman who was pivotal in the “oxford movement” also known as Tractarians. They were a group of Anglicans who championed the catholic nature of the Church of England and were pivotal in moulding the character of the CofE as we know it today. Hopefully this photo won't turn itself on its side as some have done recently. I don't know why that happens (answers on a postcard please).



I have recorded a YouTube reflection on the day's readings called "Taste and see that the Lord is good". This perspective owes much to theologian Alexander Schmemmann (via +Rowan Williams) and if you'd like to access that just click here. <https://youtu.be/PgLW6YsgPU>

I have also posted it on my Blog if you'd prefer to read it. Just click here. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2020/07/taste-and-see-that-lord-is-good-pslam.html>

Today would have been mum's 85th birthday. Dad, at 88 is doing very well and although missing mum terribly is able to enjoy life. He told me of a lovely trip to the seaside with my brother and sister and her husband a couple of days ago which he enjoyed immensely and he is really looking forward to the FA cup final today (especially as it is between two London clubs!) Note: When Dad, as the only southerner present at family gatherings in Newcastle his party piece, always demanded by the Geordie hordes was singing "Maybe it's because I'm a Londoner".

Perception of Risk

This topic has gained prominence because of the health crisis and the current furore over face coverings which are now mandatory for Sunday worship from next Sunday 8th August. People's reaction to risk varies enormously and largely depends on how data is presented.

For example, I received a phone call from the Doctor on Monday to inform me that my blood test has revealed that I have a 10% chance of having a heart attack in the next ten years, unless I reduce my cholesterol (10% is the threshold above which you get a call). I suspect that a lot of people might just have heard the word "heart attack" and started planning their own funeral I suppose but a 10% risk of a heart attack, to me, is also a 90% chance of not having one which is pretty good odds in my view. I have nevertheless altered my diet accordingly to bring the possibility down below 10%.

Life is risky – you take your life in your hands just getting up every day and we are all going to die of something one day anyway and you take appropriate steps to lessen clear and obvious risks consistent with your personality and worldview within which you can still enjoy your life to the maximum.

People react differently to risk. For cholesterol read Covid-19. Because of the way they are built, their experience, worldview, upbringing, beliefs, and their context people naturally react differently to the same data and their attitude to

certain measures varies enormously but none of them are necessarily wrong. That is their response and you cannot gainsay a personal response. I daresay we all modify our behaviour according to new data but not necessarily in the same way which is the drawback to having “one size fits all” rules. Some think they are absolutely essential, and others see them as absolutely ridiculous and neither response seems to be comprehended by the other side. But it is just the way we are.

The Prayer for Today can be prayed humbly by anyone wherever they are on the spectrum of response to the information coming at us from all directions. I think is from Kenya

**From the cowardice that dare not face new truth,
From the laziness that is content with half-truth
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Good Lord deliver us**

Love and peace,
Martin

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