

Dear friends,

Having conducted three funerals last week and prepared the ground for two more, to maintain a certain equilibrium one needs to see life and death as a whole thing and know that spiritually we live our lives against an infinite horizon. Everybody's feelings are important, and love is the underlying principle of the universe. Once those planks are in place, all lives are a blessing, and helping to frame their life and death to help their loved ones grieve and remember and commit their souls to God is a privilege.

The open-air Cream Tea concert outside All Saints church hall in East Budleigh was blessed with sunny weather and a huge success. Every ticket was sold and others turned up on the day marking a brilliant re-emergence of the "Friends of All Saints" organising committee after a year and a half lay off. A proper community event enjoyed by all!

On a sad note.

Many of you will have fond memories of Margaret Cameron. She did her curacy at St. Peter's around 20 years ago. Sadly, I have to report that she died early on Saturday morning after a fall. She has been unwell for the past year or so, but I gather her death was quite sudden after the fall.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her husband Hamilton, who has requested that you don't phone at the moment or send flowers.

Sunday 5th September – Trinity 14 – Proper 18

The venerable Trevor Jones is presiding at St. Peter's, Fr. Peter is presiding at All Saints and John Archibald is leading a service of the word at St. Michael's.

Isaiah 35: 4-7. The life-giving waters of God's spirit will cast out fear, and give spiritual enlightenment that enables the fulness of life that John (who wrote the gospel) wrote about hundreds of years later. For the spirit of Christ is eternal and Isaiah, as all true prophets can, rightly discerned God's spirit.

James 2: 1-10 (11-13) 14-17. James continues his treatise on being “doers of the word”, eschewing hypocrisy and embracing integrity. He starts by condemning partiality as un-Christian, for to judge people by how much money they have denies the fundamental truth that God sees us all as equally loved and bearing the image of God.

Mark 7: 24-37. The true significance of these particular healings is their location – in Gentile majority areas. The central message is that God does not discriminate between Jews and non-Jews and his healing love is for all people everywhere. Particularly in the exchange with the Syrophenician woman. Read it again knowing that Jesus uses the diminutive form of the word “dogs” so is actually more like “doggies” or “lapdogs” and imagine a wry grin on his face into the bargain and you will be close to the original context of this acted parable.

The lighter side! Courtesy of Mike in Gainford.

Volkswagen have introduced a new all electric version of their small car which is sure to be very popular in Yorkshire, because: -

. . . . It is called an E-Up!

Thought for the day.

With a flurry of activities, a little spate of baptisms and now an adult baptism in St. Michael's Otterton, inquiries about confirmation, congregations increasing week by week, It is hard not to feel buoyant about our prospects and feeling justified in our decision to remain open when all around us closed over this past eighteen months.

It is easy to become quite cynical about the state of the C of E nationally and cast a covetous eye over the operations of huge churches in big urban centres, but we have to be who we are, doing what we do, diligently and well and not be dismissive of ourselves. We are perfectly formed and suited to our environment and “serving the people of Devon with Joy” as the Diocesan catch phrase has it.

We should have confidence in ourselves, based in turn on a confidence in the God in whom we place our trust. That confidence is not dented by restrictions, pandemics or any other obstacle put in our way because God is with us in our very being and ultimately God cannot be thwarted.

The Prayer for Today I find quite inspiring and empowering
and is by Ted Loder.

Empower me

To be a bold participant,

Rather than a timid saint in waiting,

In the difficult ordinariness of now.

To exercise the authority of honesty,

Rather than defer to power,

Or deceive to get it.

To influence someone for justice,

Rather than impress anyone for gain.

And by grace to find treasures

Of joy, of friendship, of peace

Hidden in the fields of the daily

You give me to plough.

Love and peace,

Martin

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