

Dear friends,

**You could say** that the three churches of the RMC were “Points of light amidst the encircling gloom” when up to half of all churches in England felt it necessary to close last Sunday. I want to pay tribute to everybody who is opening up, setting up, and turning up and contributing to keeping our churches functioning during this lockdown. I want to also thank the people live-streaming our service from East Budleigh, and those who have been recording services and loading them on our website for people unable to turn up in person and our Pastoral care team for keeping contact with our members who need supporting during this difficult time.

**Increasing amounts** of people are now telling me they have been contacted for their inoculations – or indeed they have already had them. So after February I can foresee our congregations rising again to the numbers we were getting before the lockdowns started way back in last March along with a goodly number we have picked up along the way through our resilience and just keeping going when all around us stopped meeting.

## **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> January – Epiphany 3**

I will be presiding at the 8am and 10am services at St. Peter’s on Sunday and Rev. Karen Young will preside at the 9.30 at All saints East Budleigh and the 11am at St. Michael’s Otterton.

**Genesis 14: 17-20.** We have two of my favourite, most enigmatic Bible readings today. The first one centres on Melchizedek the priest-king of Salem (Jerusalem) the “priest of God most high” who brought Abram bread and wine and Abram pays him homage by tithing his possessions. Melchizedek has always been seen as a pre-figuring of Jesus Christ and the next time his name appears is in psalm 110 and then in the new testament book of Hebrews where Jesus Christ’s priesthood is likened to that of Melchizedek.

**Revelation 19: 6-10.** The church is the “bride of Christ” at the final consummation when all will be revealed. Another notable tenet here is the injunction to worship God alone which reinforces the original impulse of the first two of the ten commandments.

**John 2: 1-11.** My other favourite story today is the wedding feast at Cana. This acted parable is the entire gospel encapsulated into one beautiful story. It is the first and key-note sign to which all other signs in John's gospel refer back to. Note that John never uses the term miracle but always calls them signs. John does that because they are signs that point to a greater truth rather than just a collection of spectacular happenings.



**The water of our lives transformed into rich wine through knowing Christ**

**Psalm 110** has always loomed large in Christian theology because of the nature of the Lord talking to a Lord who “sits on his right hand” which speaks into the fact that the Divine is not a singularity and his universal eternal priesthood is likened to that of Melchizedek.

## Announcement of the Messiah's Reign A Psalm of David.

110 The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at My right hand,  
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”  
2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.  
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!  
3 Your people *shall be* volunteers  
In the day of Your power;  
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,  
You have the dew of Your youth.  
4 The Lord has sworn  
And will not relent,  
“You *are* a priest forever  
According to the order of Melchizedek.”  
5 The Lord *is* at Your right hand;  
He shall [\[a\]](#)execute kings in the day of His wrath.  
6 He shall judge among the nations,  
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,  
He shall [\[b\]](#)execute the heads of many countries.  
7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;  
Therefore He shall lift up the head.

**Note:** Someone told me they'd received one of those pesky scam emails again purporting to be from me wanting them to help by sending an Amazon voucher to my niece. I hope you know I'd never request any kind of financial help – certainly not via an email - so please do just ignore any similar emails.

### Thought for the day.

I had my first meeting with a new spiritual director yesterday and later this week I am being introduced to a “reflective practice group” where I will join several other clergy from across the Diocese led by a facilitator to share and deepen our spirituality and better lead and cope sensitively with leading people into a deeper relationship with the divine. This is quite disciplined with 18 sessions over three groups of six sessions a year. Whilst we all have feet of clay, I discerned the need that if I am to lead people into a deeper appreciation of the universal Christ I need to make sure I remain anchored in the divine myself, hence my recent talking about Cursillo, rules of life, and prayer and my embarking on a clergy support group and spiritual direction is an extension of that impulse.

Worship and action have too often been seen as two separate things sometimes opposed to each other. But actually, they have a symbiotic relationship to each other. Spiritual practice and worship transform the way you think, act and deal with the world so they are two sides of the same coin. Christian action depends on meaningful and life-giving Christian worship. Spirit filled Eucharistic and liturgical worship is life giving and joyful. It is who we are as a church and we can deepen our appreciation of it and its ability to change us.

**The prayer for Today** comes from the Church of South India.

**Almighty God,  
Who has manifested thy Son Jesus Christ to be a light to mankind  
Grant that we thy people, being nourished by thy word and sacraments  
May be strengthened to show forth to all men the unsearchable riches  
of Christ  
So he may be known, adored and obeyed to the ends of the earth  
Who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit,  
One God, world without end.  
Amen.**

Love and peace,  
Martin

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