

Dear friends,

I have recorded a YouTube reflection called “I am who I am”. This enigmatic phrase comes from Exodus 3:14 when Moses asks God who he should say has sent him. This description of God as “pure being” is a fitting compliment to the Sunday lectionary readings describing God as the only eternal reality that will be left after the heavens and the earth have passed away. You can access it by clicking here. <https://youtu.be/VS7iNYRKFJY>

As ever, alternatively if you’d prefer to read it, it is also available on my Blog which you can access by clicking here. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2020/08/i-am-who-i-am.html>

Filmed services

The streaming of services on-line has got the go-ahead so we are embarking on producing “stand alone services” to be included on our website, via this email and also via our facebook pages and a soon to be unveiled new RMC YouTube channel. These productions won’t be filmed “live” because we need to put them together professionally and adding the music and singing which we cannot do in church at the moment. The impetus for me was the fact that (the current situation anyway) is that Carol services will be banned this year so producing a Christmas carol service would be an obvious starting point but we need to practise putting together a service before then so Harvest would be another obvious choice. Input would be welcomed from across the RMC. Other ways of utilising our recording equipment would be to film the “Open the book” team acting out Bible stories and making the short films available to the schools. We feel this would be a very useful addition to the “red meat” of our live worship services in these difficult times. So watch this space!

Psalm 103: 1-5

The psalms are a wonderful repository of poetry that covers the entire range of human fears, joys, despair, gratitude, praise - you name it, there is a psalm that reflects it. What would I recommend for someone looking for uplift in a difficult time? You can’t do much better than psalm 103. The whole of the psalm (22 verses) is pretty marvellous but the first five verses are deserving of special mention I think. Here’s what others have written about it;

If we assume that it was written by David, Charles Spurgeon thought, “We should attribute it to his later years when he had a higher sense of the preciousness of pardon, because a keener sense of sin, than in his younger days. His clear sense of the frailty of life indicates his weaker years, as also does the very fulness of his praiseful gratitude.” (Charles Spurgeon)

“It is perhaps the most perfect song of pure praise to be found in the Bible.... Through centuries it has been sung by glad hearts, and today is as fresh and full of beauty as ever.” (G. Campbell Morgan)

- ¹ Praise the Lord, my soul;
 all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
- ² Praise the Lord, my soul,
 and forget not all his benefits—
- ³ who forgives all your sins
 and heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit
 and crowns you with love and compassion,
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
 so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

The word on the street – by Harry Williams CR

Children are not innocent creatures, as Freud, Henry James and Ronald Searle have shown us in their own ways. What is true of children is that they have no riches. They cannot trust to the character they have built up over the years. They cannot say to themselves, “I am this sort of person. I am not that sort of person.” Hence, they are very open to influence. To receive is for them the most natural thing in the world. For the average child, life is one long act of receiving. They have as yet no defences against life.

When Jesus urged men to repent, he was urging them to become as little children. He wasn’t asking them to eat the dust. He was confronting them with the necessity of a radical change of outlook, a fundamental re-orientation of their lives, so that they would no longer trust for security in the persona they had built up — the drama of being me which I continuously stage for my own benefit — so that they would no longer trust that, but have the courage to become as receptive as little children, with all the openness to life, the taking down of the shutters and the throwing away of the armour which that entails.

The Prayer for Today is from a Mennonite source. (I confess I knew very little about the Mennonites – but they are a protestant sect related to the Amish and trace their roots back to Holland). A beautiful prayer none the less.

Prayer for Openness

**Jesus, you open us
to new life, new hope, new possibilities.
You conquer the way we
close up, close down, and close in.
Jesus, lover of us all,
open our hearts to feel your compassion
for people we would rather walk by.
open our ears to hear the cries of the suffering
deep inside where we cannot fail to be moved.
open our understanding to new ways of living
that do not diminish anyone.
open our eyes to see a vision of this world
as you would have it.
May these prayerful words on our lips
become the meditations of our hearts
as we live in ways that are acceptable to you
O God, our Rock and our Redeemer.**

Love and peace,
Martin

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