

Dear friends,

The service at St. Peter's saw a large congregation enjoy a joyful service amidst the cables, screen and computer paraphernalia involved with staging the Budleigh literary festival. In fact we couldn't have coffee afterwards because the festival team were back in immediately afterwards to prepare the church to host the sainted Richard Dawkins talk about his latest book. Somewhat ironic you might think, but apparently, I heard that Richard Dawkins spoke very well indeed!

**Names** are flowing in for our resurrected Dinner club. The Golf club would like an idea of numbers as early as the end of this week so if you are considering coming, don't delay and contact Fran ASAP.

**The schools** are now re-engaging with the church. I have already started assemblies with the two village schools and St. Peter's school hold their Harvest festival service in St. Peter's church later today. 296 children and me – wish me luck!

**Louise and I** attended just three literary festival talks this year (Miles Jupp cancelled) and the standard was very high. Ones we couldn't get tickets for like Celia Imre, Darcy Bussell and Alan Johnson the politician, we heard afterwards were brilliant. Now I don't want to pull rank and demand entry to my own church but the thought did occur.....

## **Sunday 26th September – St Michael and All Angels**

We have translated this to the nearest Sunday because it is of course the patronal festival of our church in Otterton and although we are no longer having joint services, we all celebrate together in our own churches. There is an infant baptism at All Saints and an adult baptism at St. Michael's as well. At All Saints we will follow the service of the word up until the peace as normal and then celebrate the baptism which will replace the Eucharist, so if the Eucharist is essential to you please think about attending the 10am at St. Peter's or the 11am at St. Michael's. I will be presiding at the services at All Saints and St. Michael's and the venerable Trevor Jones will preside at St. Peter's.

**Genesis 28: 10-17.** The beautiful story of Jacob's ladder shows us that there is a connection between earth and heaven at every point on earth. Indeed, in Luke 17. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God is within us! It also relates the fact that are largely unaware of this truth most of the time until we have a special incident that points this fact out to us. Angels are messengers of God. In fact the Hebrew word for a messenger and an Angel are the very same thing.

**Revelation 12: 7-12.** War in the spiritual realm between Good and evil mirrors the spiritual battle that goes on in the heart of every person on earth. This internal "Holy war" is what Muslims call jihad. Christians are bolstered by the belief that while this war still goes on, we have had a foretaste of the end result where Goodness love and truth win out in the end. Our guarantee of that is bound up with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's defiant "yes" to all that is Good and Holy overcoming all that is evil in this world.

**John 1: 47-51.** The message that the messengers of God are delivering to mankind through the resurrection is that however brutal and evil things become and however dark things seem, there is no dark so dark that God cannot bring forth light from it. This is the essential message of the resurrection which is the ground that springs forth all Christian hope in the future.

## Thought for the day

I stopped getting a daily paper some time ago but now I've been given a free subscription to an on-line version of a national newspaper I dip into it quite often. What I notice immediately is the cataclysmic tone of almost every article on almost every subject, designed to get the blood pumping, raise hackles, and induce anxiety and a sense of near permanent crisis. But I learned something from the excellent Tim Harford talk at the literary festival – Lies, damned lies and statistics - (He presents radio 4's "more or less" programme) about how to treat statistics and the endless data that we are bombarded with. The three Cs are Keep calm, the second is consider the context, and the third is to be curious about what the data is really trying to achieve. Looking at news items in the same way helps to gain a more rational, truer and less fractious notion of what is being conveyed. Nothing is ever quite as bad as it is being portrayed, editorial bias can spin the most innocuous story into Armageddon, and be ready to change your mind if the article challenges your pre-conceived view of the world. And if all else fails, stop looking at the media altogether for a while (the world doesn't stop turning), meditate or silently contemplate, and remind yourself that you

believe in a universe where God is in ultimate control and that in the end, all will be well, and all manner of things will be well.

**The Prayer for Today** is the oft quoted but probably least manifested prayer of St. Theresa of Avila. And it harkens back to what I quoted from Luke's gospel earlier that "The kingdom of God is within you"

**Christ has  
No body on earth but yours  
No hands but yours  
No feet but yours.  
Yours are the eyes  
Through which to look out  
Christ's compassion to the world.  
Yours are the feet  
With which he is to  
Go about doing good.  
Yours are the hands  
With which he is to  
Bless everyone now.**

Love and peace,  
Martin

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