

Dear friends,

The wedding began as all weddings do with scores of people done up to the nines waiting for the bride to appear with beautiful flower arrangements both inside and outside the church. And then we came to the first hymn, and I admit that I was fully expecting to sing a solo (as so often happens) but then the church erupted. I have never heard All saints or any other church for that matter filled with such hearty singing. Louise who was sitting in the vicarage garden having a coffee at the time could hear the singing clearly even from there. By the time we came to “Jerusalem”, the final hymn I was glowing and it wasn't a surprise to hear afterwards that there were a fair few Welsh people in the congregation.



Beautifully done!

Anyway, hearty congratulations to William and Georgia in their new life together.



Equally gorgeous!

The next day after the morning services there was another wedding planning meeting and then the first Civic service since 2019 in St. Peter's at 3pm. The mayors and deputy mayors of Budleigh and Exmouth resplendent in their chains of office played their part in acknowledging and celebrating public service followed by coffee and cake in the Peter Hall.

Note: There will be no email for a couple of weeks because I will be enduring the rigours of Venice and the Dolomites but I'll be back soon enough refreshed by finally visiting what must be the most extraordinary and special city on earth.

Sunday 28th August – Trinity 11 – Proper 17

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's and Reverend Margaret Scrivener will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively.

Ecclesiasticus 10: 12-18. This book of the Bible is located in protestant Bibles in what is called the apocrypha (and only some protestant Bibles have the apocrypha!) and is also known as the wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach. As a compliment to the gospel reading, it is saying that all sovereignty belongs to God and failure to recognise this and when we start to feel pride in our own status, decisions and autonomy, this leads to disaster.

Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16. Entertaining angels unawares is a lovely phrase that assumes that God works through other people to reach out speak to us and is also reminiscent of the three visitors to Abraham in Genesis. I always also extend my understanding of people in prison and being tortured to people who are in a mental prison and psychologically tortured as well as literally in prison. Loyalty and fidelity in marriage is a reflection of the loyalty and fidelity that we must show to God

Luke 14: 1, 7-14. Having an inflated estimation of yourself – pride – is warned against here by Jesus who praises the gift of humility and having a more sober assessment of yourself when choosing your place at table. But the shared meal is also a picture of the kingdom of heaven at the end of time so has a wider spiritual application. At the end Jesus advises inviting the poor, lame and blind to the banquet, people outside the social milieu of the

pharisees and actually considered unclean in Jewish religion. All are welcome at the banquet where the host is God himself and we all have and show a proper humility towards God.

Thought for Today

I am so looking forward to Venice. It appears so romantic and ethereal and filled with canals and alleyways to get lost in, good food, crammed with churches and art and music. They do say that a change is as good as a rest, and this is a change that seems pregnant with possibilities. Enhancing our cultural capital has become a bit of a mission lately but you don't need to go to Venice to do that. Widening our horizons by engaging in literature, art, music and theatre are avenues open to all and sundry if it becomes anyone to prioritise these things that shape us to become a more fully rounded and interesting human being. "Fullness of life" which is God's desire for every one of us has its obvious spiritual dimension but also a practical "lived experience" dimension. I read something very helpful to me the other day and was this – "The chasm between the physical and the spiritual is not greater than between a thought and a word and it is hard to know where one ends and another begins". This speaks into the truth that physical things have spiritual benefits (and is indeed the underlying philosophy behind Yoga) and who amongst us hasn't been lifted spiritually by a stirring piece of music or piece of art or sculpture or indeed....by a gorgeous city astride a grand canal dripping with romance, history and art.

The Prayer for Today is very short and to the point and was written by Albert Schweitzer.

Here Lord is my life. I place it on the altar today. Use it as you will.

Love and peace,
Martin