

Dear friends,

More excellent news on the vaccine front this morning, so while we might still have a rough few months ahead of us we can be increasingly confident that the future is bright (if not orange).

## Comfort and Joy

A CofE initiative that starts on Christmas day and runs to the 2<sup>nd</sup> January and provides daily readings and reflections in a little booklet. We shall endeavour to purchase enough for the three churches and distribute them when we can meet again. For more info. See [www.churchofengland.org/comfortAndJoy](http://www.churchofengland.org/comfortAndJoy)

## Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November – Advent Sunday

The church year starts on Advent Sunday and 2020/2021 is **Year B** which means in effect that most of our lectionary readings we hear on Sunday will be from Mark's gospel. Last year was mostly from Matthew, and after this year they will be mainly from Luke. John's gospel gets distributed fairly evenly across every season

**Isaiah 64: 1-9.** This passage expresses both hope and frustration so is a fitting choice for Advent, a season that lives with the frustration of hoping and waiting for a better world that is beyond our capacity of human beings to achieve. In the time it was written, the Jews had returned from exile in Babylon and the re-building of the Temple was a possibility but lack of progress or any signs from God were undermining confidence.

**1 Corinthians 1: 3-9.** It is a shame that the lectionary compilers left out the first two verses because they set the scene for what follows – that we are all called by God. Paul is called by God but also the congregation are called to be Holy and they all “call” on the Lord Jesus Christ. Importantly they are all “called into the fellowship on his son Jesus Christ our Lord”. This is important because of the factionalism that has to be addressed further into the letter. Given that the factions were based on the use and abuse of spiritual gifts, Paul makes sure he emphasises that the gifts are a gift from God and not as a result of any inherent merit in the congregation.

## Mark 13: 24-37

As previously discussed, Apocalyptic expectations are all set within a very brief future which is why the readers were told to “keep awake.” The spirit of the piece is expectation of a new world order under the control of Christ “the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven”. However this should not be read in isolation from the previous verses in which the emphasis is on not thinking that the end is near and as verse 32 says not even Jesus knows when the end will come but “only the Father”.

**The lighter side!** So, it's official then.



## 200 club draw.

Just to emphasise that my job has many facets I shall be drawing the “200 club” Christmas draw earlier than normal this year outside St. Peter’s at 2.30pm today! Prizes are £100, £50,£30,£20,£10 and £5

## Thought for the day

Hoping for perfection, praying that all hurts are healed and all wrongs are set right, where there is no more suffering, tears or death or decay is the substance of Christian faith in “the day of the Lord” or the “Apocalypse” or the “Parousia” (Being present) of the Lord.

Our frustration is that all those things are humanly speaking beyond our grasp and can only finally ever be achieved by God. But nevertheless in this interim time – the time between the inauguration of the Kingdom of God in Jesus and the final culmination, whenever that may be - is a massive chasm of time where it is really up to the church to model and try to act as if Jesus were here acting through us. The truth is that Christ incarnate in all “people who love” with a divine love is the only way forward for humankind. People who love may be formally Christian or atheist. They may be Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh or whatever. Love transcends religious boundaries so that wherever love is, God is. Christians are supposedly the people who should know this best but we have become bogged down in placing theological or ecclesial rectitude above love which means theologically we have placed ourselves above God because as the Bible tells us plainly “God is love”. When we do that, we have broken the most fundamental commandment warning against idolatry. Idolatry is treating anything as more important than God.

## A Poignant picture invites reflection

When John Hutchinson was in Northern France visiting relative’s war graves, he also visited a German war cemetery and came upon this grave of a German Jewish girl who died fighting for the Fatherland in 1918. As John himself noted, had she lived another 25 years or so she may well have died in very different circumstances.



**Only** a week and a half of national lockdown to endure, which means two more “morning prayers by Zoom” in East Budleigh before reverting to meeting together in church. A Big thank you to Margaret Scrivener for facilitating this for us!

**The prayer for today** is by a Sufi Divine and is absolutely lovely and in full accord with the law of love.

### **Prayer for Peace**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
which is perfect and everlasting, that our souls may radiate peace.**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
that we may think, act, and speak harmoniously.**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
that we may be contented and thankful for Thy bountiful gifts.**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
that amidst our worldly strife we may enjoy Thy bliss.**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
that we may endure all and tolerate all in the thought of Thy grace and mercy.**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
that our lives may become a divine vision, and in Thy light all darkness may vanish.**

**Send us Thy peace, O Lord,  
our Father and Mother, that we, Thy children on earth may all unite in one family.**

**Amen**

Hazrat Inayat Khan

Love and peace,

Martin

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