

Dear friends,

From the first line of “For all the saints” to the last line of “when the saints go marching in”, our first “singing” Sunday service at St. Peter’s for a year and a half on Sunday signalled a release of pent-up energy and the large congregation was in obvious good spirits. It was the incident with St. James’ mother asking for preferment for her sons that provided the fuel for my sermon which centred on the need for humility. If you’d like to hear what I said just click on this link. <https://youtu.be/COgfphY0Cvw>

But as ever, if you’d prefer to read it click on this link to my Blog. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2021/07/st-james-apostle.html>

Not waving but drowning.

During an epic 5 hour very hot walk from Drewsteignton last Friday we were warned that we probably wouldn’t meet a soul and they were right, except that in the middle of no-where (somewhere on the two moors way) we came across this epic sculpture in a field and it put me in mind of that famous poem by Stevie Nicks.



Nobody heard him, the dead man,
But still he lay moaning:
I was much further out than you thought
And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking
And now he's dead
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,
They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
(Still the dead one lay moaning)
I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.

Sunday 1st August – 9th after Trinity – Proper 13

I am at All Saints this Sunday, John Archibald is at St. Michael's and the venerable Trevor Jones is at St. Peter's. After the service at All Saints today we have the artist John Washington (and other experts) talking about his painting of Roger Conant called "Blessed are the peacemakers".

Exodus 16: 2-4,9-15. Quails arrive naturally in Northern Sinai in great numbers from Sudan and Ethiopia in August/ September and Manna is a secretion from a flowering tree such as the Tamarisk bush, assisted by the sting and secretion of a tree louse. Thus, God's provision for the complaining Israelites has its origins in natural phenomena. Theologically, verses 17 and 18 (not included today) say that every person's needs were met completely which is the take-home message of today's reading.

Ephesians 4: 1-16. What I started to talk about last week that the church is a body of equals where individuals within it are gifted with some special charism is expressed beautifully here by Paul. These abilities or charisms are indeed "gifts" so the one who is to be praised of course is the gift giver who is God himself.

John 6: 24-35. Whether the manna in the wilderness (in Exodus) was a natural or supernatural event, its goal was simply to satisfy a physical need just as the multiplication of bread by Jesus was simply to satisfy a physical need. Jesus upbraids them for seeking short-term materialism against lasting spiritual benefit. “Food that endures” is equated with “following” Jesus in the synoptic gospels or in John’s gospel with “believing in him”. The familiar use of the construction “I am” conflates Jesus with his Father as “I am” is the name of God given in Exodus 3:14. Jesus says “I am the bread of life”

Thought for the day

We were very anxious about the garden party on Saturday, but when the time came the sun shone and people came in large numbers from all three churches and enjoyed a wonderful time. Even when the rain came, seeing people stoically remaining at their tables with their brollies up while others sought refuge in either the Marquee or house, the spirits never dropped. We are definitely making this an annual event and special thanks to all those who helped make this day happen – you know who you are! I was at St. Peter’s for the two services the next day and the Spirit was good at both but as I started this email saying it was at the 10am service that it became clear that some sort of barrier had been crossed and people had a certain new energy and optimism. It was all fairly overwhelming – I even forgot the words to the general blessing (to much amusement) at the end, and afterwards the coffee time was crowded also.

This weekend for me, represents an end and a beginning. We have suffered and experienced a lot as a community over the past eighteen months and we have come through it all strong and united and in good heart. A lady new to St. Peter’s introduced herself to me at the end of the service who told me how wonderful the service was and how she was looking forward to being here on a regular basis. A good omen for the future of the Raleigh Mission community as a whole!

The Prayer for Today is a prayer for walkers that we picked up in a lovely little tucked away church – St Andrews Hittisleigh where we stopped for lunch on our aforementioned walk.

**Whilst walking,
May our eyes be open to goodness,
Whilst our eyes are busy
May our hearts be open to learning,
Whilst there are pressures,**

**May we know what is truly valuable,
Whilst there are expectations,
May we have the courage to do what is right,
Whilst there are responsibilities,
May we walk boldly with the Spirit,
May our steps be guided,
May we carefully listen as we walk,
May we build the power to serve others with love,
If we live by the Spirit,
May we stay in step with the Spirit.**

Love and peace,
Martin

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