

Dear friends,

As I said in the services themselves, the baptisms of Arthur, a new baby at All Saints and Stacey, an adult at St. Michael's on Sunday was an enormous boost to our confidence and self-esteem after coming through a difficult year. The arrival of two new couples re-locating from Sidmouth to our worshipping community in Otterton has also added to a general feeling of buoyancy. Jo's interactive intercessions utilising the help of youngsters from the baptism party were inspired at All saints – many thanks for that.

After all of that it was lovely to be able to join the regulars at the Solo's lunch at St. Peter's which was very tasty indeed and much needed!

Sunday 3rd October – Harvest festival

I am presiding at both services at St. Peter's, Father Peter is presiding at All Saints and John Archibald presides at the service of the word in St. Michael's Otterton. If people bring any gifts of food and present them during the service, best follow the list of most needed items needed by Exmouth foodbank and listed in our pew sheet. If they can be taken up to the altar at the same time as the "offertory hymn" that would be appropriate and we'll make sure it gets delivered.

Joel 2: 21-27. The abundance of nature, the fruit and crops, are symbols of salvation for the people of Israel. Abundance of food and drink has always served as a metaphor for salvation and the fulness of the kingdom of God. In the Bible the pictures of the "wedding feast" or a wonderful banquet are used to serve the same function.

1 Timothy 2: 1-7. Some important theological truths here. God desires the salvation of all people (no insiders or outsiders) and regardless of what atheists or agnostic or people of other faiths may believe it is stated as an act of faith that there is one unique mediator between God and the whole of humankind – Jesus the Christ. Through Jesus God spoke to all humanity everywhere, whether that is perceived or not.

Matthew 6: 25-33. The thrust of this passage is that we re-direct our efforts from purely material and selfish ends towards a more loving and trusting and outward looking perspective. Apparently, the word translated as

“worry” carries the nuance of “Make effort towards” so becomes less about neuroticism and becomes more about our priorities in life.

Speaking about Harvest Festival, when arriving for a scheduled meeting with Roger Bass from the British Legion I stumbled across the preparations for the St. Peter’s flower festival and can see that it is going to be a spectacular event. From today (the 29th) to the 6th October there will be twenty flower arrangements in the church. Individuals have been given free rein to do what they see as fitting the occasion. For not only is this for Harvest festival but Chris Parrish organised this in memory of Janet who died last year and it is going to be a fitting tribute. Viewing is recommended between 11am and 5pm when there will also be free refreshments!

Open the Book is a group of people from our congregations who occasionally dress up and act out Bible stories in our three church schools, a venture that the children absolutely love. The schools have already been asking when we are going to re-start. Post-pandemic has seen the numbers of people involved decline and so to maintain this vital act of service to the children of our parishes we are looking for more people to get involved. If at all interested, please contact me or Fran and we will put you in touch with Christine Channon who now heads up the team.

Thought for the day

Apparently, the lorry driver shortage is across the whole of Western Europe and the problem pre-dates Covid. Drivers have been leaving the job in droves because what was once a good pleasurable job on the open roads has succumbed to the modern pressures of over-regulation and every second of your day being mapped out and recorded by computers and time sheets, with unrealistic targets and pressures changing what was once a good job to a drudge. It takes a lot of money to compensate for that sort of thing.

I’ve experienced the same myself when I was a labourer in a warehouse. When it was American owned it was a great permanent job with excellent wages and one way or another, left to our own devices we always got the job done. The problems came when a British company (ironically) took over and the culture changed dramatically with us being “time and motioned” to within an inch of our lives trying to squeeze every ounce of their pound of flesh from us in what was already a heavy, physical job. Morale plummeted, people left (as did I) and what was once a well-paid fulltime job for honest people willing

to work hard – we were eventually replaced by temporary workers on the minimum wage.

The trouble is lorry drivers aren't so easily replaced as we were. People need to be treated as human beings with lives and families to support and not as simply an "economic unit" to be worked into the ground. I am a strong supporter of the free market and entrepreneurial culture and a bit of a libertarian to boot but that must be balanced by appropriate respect for the dignity of labour and people's work should be rewarded adequately. That to me is a sound Christian work ethic. As the current situation attests you can push and pressurise people only so far and eventually, they vote with their feet.

The Prayer for Today is by Basil Naylor

**Help us O God to understand what your will is
In the confusion and unrest of our times.
Give us insight to distinguish between the sign of your Spirit
Demanding change and renewal, and the signs of human greed
And lust for power.
That we may be your fellow workers in creating an order of society
Which acknowledges your sovereign power and might.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Love and peace,
Martin

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