

Dear friends,

**The** importance of “place” was highlighted for me yesterday by two separate incidents. A young man joined us for morning worship from London who had been baptised in All Saints church in 1974 and was making a kind of pilgrimage and at midday a French/ American extended family joined us for the internment of ashes of someone who had died in France after living there for decades but had insisted that his remains be returned and interred in the same plot as his parents. What with quarantine restrictions and the paucity of flights it was a minor miracle that they were able to get together at all but this was outweighed by the necessity of being laid to rest in a certain place. He leaves his French wife (90 years old) who is also determined to be buried in the same spot in East Budleigh when her time comes.

**Think** of all the places that have meant so much to you in your life. Why such an emotional pull? A tentative reply to that rhetorical question is that our human stories generally like to be grounded somewhere definite, and our individual stories are given form, shape and substance by concrete associations with those places. They sometimes also link us with other people’s stories and histories, generally family. There is intellectually speaking nothing rational in these associations but there is something definitely spiritual going on and is about relationship in its widest understanding. Relationship with people and places.

## **Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August – Trinity 9 (Proper 14)**

I will preside at St. Peter’s at 10am and Karen will preside at All Saints at 9.30am and St. Michael’s at 11am. The lectionary readings are as follows.

**1 Kings 19: 9-18.** Old Testament theophanies (encounters with God) don’t come any more thought provoking or mystical than this. God is not in the earthquake or fire on Mount Horeb (another name for Mount Sinai) but is “heard” in the sound of sheer silence, as the NRSV Bible translates it. Hearing God in the silence has been equated with a person’s conscience guiding their actions and also interpreted as meaning that God’s purposes will not be achieved by spectacular physical phenomena, but by people quietly carrying out God’s will.

**Romans 10: 5-15.** Interpretation of this piece is fraught with difficulties regarding context and meaning. The overall context is clearly on the relationship between Jews and Christians and whether God's promises to the Jews are still extant. What is interesting is that Paul quotes extensively from the Hebrew scriptures (Old testament) without any regard for the original context. He is in a lively dialogue with the writings which is far more akin to Jewish engagement with scripture than with modern Christian interpretation. Within the wider context of Jewish/Christian conundrum Paul stresses that the gospel knows no barriers (verses 12,13) though of course it has first to be preached before it can be believed.

**Matthew 14: 22-33.** The deepest meaning of this acted parable is that one who often appears to be absent in the storms of life is yet in truth always present. Peter too can also walk on water all the while he keeps his eyes on Jesus, but the moment he is distracted the "rock" starts to sink like a stone. He is saved from drowning by the strong arm of Jesus. The theological point is obvious, and this episode follows a time when Jesus retreated to a mountain by himself to pray. The juxtaposition of this walking on water story with the feeding of the 5000 has long been a part of church tradition because they recall the twin Exodus themes of the manna in the wilderness and the parting of the red sea, presenting Jesus as the new Moses to a largely Jewish congregation.

**Midweek Communion** at St. Peter's is re-starting today!  
Every Wednesday at 9.30am in the Lady Chapel

**The Lighter side!** Thanks to Mike in Gainford for this.

A man's wife died.

Sometime after the funeral he was thinking about what to put on her gravestone.

He decided to have her name and dates and the simple inscription . . 'She was thine'

He ordered the headstone and a few weeks later it was installed.

When the man went to see it, he saw that the inscription read . . 'She was thin'

The man rushed home and phoned the Mason.

"You have made a mistake", he told him. "You have missed off the 'e' "

"I'm dreadfully sorry ", said the Mason, "I'll go and put that right first thing in the morning "

Later on the next day the man went back to the cemetery.

The inscription now read, 'Ee . . . She was thin'

## Thought for the day

The landscape of lockdown restrictions changes daily, pleasing some and dismaying others. Thankfully, the Sir Walter Raleigh pub is now open, so we went along to enjoy a slightly surreal pint or two to assess the situation! Currently, the infection rate in Devon is officially only 1 in 100,000 (the lowest by far in Britain) and there have been no coronavirus admissions to the R,D & E hospital for a fortnight now. However, talk about regional solutions to regional contexts remains just talk and whether we like it or not Budleigh Salterton and environs must abide by the same rules that apply in Birmingham, Liverpool or Manchester.

I receive lots of strong views from both sides of the fence which leaves me pretty much in the middle trying to chart an uncertain course. I have a strong libertarian streak running through me, so you can probably guess what my personal views are but as a man “under authority” I’m sure you understand that I must still abide by the collective decisions that emanate from on high.

My considered opinion is that....I should have another beer.

## The prayer for Today is by Bishop Richard Harries

**Lord you are the deepest wisdom,  
The deepest truth,  
The deepest love,  
Within me.  
Lead me in your way**

Love and peace,  
Martin

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