

Dear friends,

I have recorded a reflection on the readings set for the second Sunday of Advent. If you'd like to watch it just click on this following link. <https://youtu.be/YHKg7JrSyw>

Alternatively, if you'd prefer to read it you can do so by clicking on this link to my Blog. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2020/12/the-peace-of-god.html>

A Bringer of Joy!



No – not me, silly! We were asked by the Diocese to nominate a “Bringer of Joy” to our local community and they were to be honoured at a Dinner at Woodberry Park hotel earlier this year which of course had to be cancelled because of the Pandemic. The “Bringer of Joy” is a person who gives tirelessly to the community and Carole Brown was nominated because of her tireless work at the community Hub and other local events. I caught up with her working at the community café that the Hub has transferred to the Methodist church hall on Wednesday to present a certificate “In gratitude for the Joy you bring to your community” from Bishop Robert and small token of appreciation for all her work. So now, whatever her husband or children say, she can tell them “I’m a bringer of joy and I have the certificate to prove it!”

Christmas Carol services

We are now fairly certain that we have three live Carol services this year – one at each church. I say “carol” services but of course congregational singing is still not allowed so they will be very different this year and the logistical challenges are very taxing but nevertheless let’s go forward in faith!

St. Michael’s Otterton on the **20th December at 4pm**

St. Peter’s Budleigh Salterton also on **20th December at 6pm**

All Saints East Budleigh on **24th December at 6pm**

Thought for Saturday

There is much discussion at the moment about opening up Christmas so that families can mix together for the festive season. I view this from a slightly different angle because I live a long way from any family and since I decided to get ordained, I haven’t had a “family” Christmas for twenty years beyond my wife and daughter. For me, rather ironically, Christmas spelled the end of extended family get-togethers. They are a wonderful memory from my youth and adulthood. But I was interested in this 2016 YouGov poll which found that 91% of the UK population celebrate Christmas in some form but only 22% considered they were celebrating the birth of Christ. 76% said they valued Christmas as a chance to spend time with family. Actually, I was pleasantly surprised that the percentage was as high as 22% for those who cited the birth of Christ as a reason for the season. We are used to being a minority in the UK nowadays, but I suppose we don’t need to be *too comfortable* with the situation either. If our faith gives us the joy and peace we claim it does, that will inevitably show through in our lives and as they say, the best advert for the voracity of the Christian faith is a changed life.

The Prayer for Today is written by noted Christian thinker and writer Henri Nouwen

Advent Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day,

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

- Henri J.M. Nouwen

Love and peace,

Martin

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