

Dear friends,

My Dad's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations were a great family occasion, and it was great to see family from different parts of the country collected together in one place.

Dad is remarkably well for his age and made it to the posh restaurant that we'd booked for the celebration. Unfortunately, unused to such rich food, although he enjoyed it at the time, he did pay for it later, but we left him looking chipper and waving us off the next morning.

Dad can see mum's grave from the back bedroom window and goes there and talks to mum every day, so she knew we were coming. Not having visited since I conducted her funeral over a year ago it was also a time for me to reflect at her graveside in a little peace and quiet.

**Next Sunday** is a busy Day. After the morning services, we have the optional walk and cream tea at Colaton Raleigh at 3pm and at 6pm we have our first choral evensong since the last lockdown which I am very much looking forward to because our choir is now sounding excellent!

## **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September – Trinity 15 – Proper 19**

I am presiding at both services at St. Peter's and the venerable Trevor Jones is at All Saints and St. Michael's. I am presiding and preaching also at Evensong at 6pm.

**Isaiah 50:4-9a.** Before a servant can teach, he must first be taught himself and life with its many sufferings and rejections is a great teacher. A text mostly applied to Jesus by Christians but can also be applied to any saint and Martyr such as St. Paul or anyone who remains faithful to the truth and pays a heavy physical price for it.

**James 3: 1-12.** James notes with some force the potential destructive power of words and in a world of spin, propaganda and hateful speech and bullying and intimidation we are unfortunately know well what he means. He then goes on to say that our words and actions much have an integrity which is one of the central themes of his letter.

**Mark 8:27-38.** Matthew and Luke softened what Mark originally wrote out of embarrassment that a great figure as the Disciple Peter might be so

maligned but great insight and misunderstanding go uncomfortably hand in hand here. Peter correctly identifies Jesus as the Messiah but then immediately misunderstands the messianic function and role to such a degree that Jesus calls him Satanic. Despite our great intentions, humanity has feet of clay so time must be taken to carefully consider our words before we speak.

**Confirmation?** I have received a couple of requests for confirmation. If anyone else is also thinking about being confirmed please let me know as it takes a little bit of planning and dates when a Bishop is available may take some organisation! There is a date at Exeter Cathedral on the 16<sup>th</sup> October with the Bishop of Plymouth which seems the best suited.

**Save the Parish.** You may hear about this group anyway soon so I'll give you a link to form your own opinion. I, as a matter of principle have always tended to shun church clubs, associations and pressure groups because they are divisive, setting people in opposition to each other. I.e. Anglo-Catholics against evangelicals, clergy against laity, women priests against people who don't believe women can be priests etc. but this group formed just one month ago after a strong article in the Spectator magazine by a London priest is quickly gathering pace. It campaigns to save the parish system which they see as being systematically eroded by official church of England dictat, through being starved of funds and resources. There is alongside that emerging a top heavy church with many more Bishops than there once were. All those groups I mentioned earlier can unite behind a movement that seeks to defend what is fundamental about Anglicanism. Anyway, enough from me – here is a link for you to see what they say for themselves. <https://savetheparish.com/>

## Thought for the day.

Human rights are a cornerstone of the modern secular Western viewpoint but they have their root in a foundational religious understanding that sees every human being (indeed, every thing) as having been created by, in and for God. Our intrinsic worth is contained within the doctrine of “original blessing” in chapter 1 of Genesis where God created everything and saw that it was good and that the pinnacle of creation was humanity which was “very good”. Whatever may have gone wrong since, usually described as the fall from Grace we were in the beginning created good by a good God. It is this intrinsic human worth that dictates to us that everyone should be treated as we ourselves would want to be treated. I don't deny that there are

many practical problems putting this belief into practice at an international level but we can start at the interpersonal level by giving and expecting in return those basic standards of politeness kindness and respect in our dealings with others. Indeed a truly Christian worldview also places the natural world and its resources in the bracket of a “gift from God” that is also intrinsically good so providing the basis of an ecological ethic that should guide our decision making towards environmental matters.

## **The Prayer for Today** is by Janet Orchard

**Forgive us God,  
That we have taken your creation for granted.  
You have given us  
The run of the land  
The pick of the crop  
And we have squandered these resources,  
Distributed them unfairly  
Vandalised their beauty  
Violated their purity**

**Forgive us God  
That we have taken your kingdom for granted  
You have given us  
The seeds of faith  
The fruits of the spirit'  
And we have misused these resources, displayed them rarely,  
Bestowed them grudgingly,  
Ignored them blithely.**

**Thank you God  
That you are stronger than our destructiveness  
And greater than our meanness,  
That you give us a fresh start, a second chance.  
Overwhelm us with the power of your resurrected love.  
Compel us with the challenge you issue for change.  
Lead us in the conquest of our own limits and restrictions.  
Drive us towards a new life of justice, peace and integrity.**

Love and peace,  
Martin

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