

Dear friends,

It was very gratifying that well over 100 people went to the main service at St. Peter's to help Colin Randall celebrate 50 years of ordination. I was hearing all about it at Solo's lunch. I heard that Colin delivered a great sermon.

**Otherwise**, it was a busy day for me with services at All Saints and presiding at the patronal festival of St. Michael's a little bit later. Then we hosted the civic service in the afternoon where one of our own, Christine Channon was recognised for her many years of service to the local council and received a bouquet of Roses in recognition of that fact. I'm not sure if I heard this correctly but I gather the roses are a variety named after Christine!

**After that** Louise and I had been invited to supper by Lady Clinton. I assumed this would be just canapes but after those we then sat down to a very full four course meal with wine and champagne. I was so full that we had to decline the cheese course which is almost unheard of (and I love cheese). So my grateful thanks to Lady Clinton and her team for that special treat.

**Harvest time** means that each church is providing just a little bit more in the food department. All Saints have bacon butties after this service. St. Peter's is having a harvest lunch at 12.30 after the service and St. Michael's are having their Harvest supper on Tuesday evening in the village hall. Do feel free to bring produce to whichever Sunday service you go to and that will be distributed to Exmouth foodbank.

### **Sunday 5th October – Harvest festival**

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's and Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at All Saints at 9.30am and John Archibald will preside at St. Michael's at 11am.

**Deuteronomy 26: 1-11.** The joy of entering a "land of milk and honey" is first of all an opportunity to show thanks to God and the "first fruits" are to be offered to the priest as a thanks offering. Then everyone celebrates together with the "aliens" that dwell with them in Israel – all are included in the celebrations. It is also an opportunity to remember Abraham (the wandering Aramean) who first set out under the guidance of God, a venture that culminated in their current good fortune.

**Philippians 4: 4-9.** A wonderfully uplifting piece of prose courtesy of St. Paul that contends that if you rejoice in the Lord always (presumably in both good and bad times) you will gain perfect peace of mind – the kind that passes all human logic and understanding. From this state, the virtues will flow easily and abundantly. Keep on practising them and people will more naturally be drawn to your faith as what produces these fruits. By their fruits you will know them

**John 6: 25-35.** "I am the bread of Life" is one of the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus. These work on the basis that "I am" is also the name of God, so they have a double meaning. Spiritual food is much more important than physical food, though of course God knows we need that as well – "Give us this day our daily bread" in the Lord's prayer can be taken as being both spiritual and physical.

## Thought for the Day.

Today's gospel has one of the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus. They could be simultaneously called the seven names of God. Because "I am" is the name of God given to Moses in Exodus 3:14. What this term signifies in the eternal, unchanging, self-existent (source less) divine entity. In John's gospel there are seven of them. Seven is a perfect number in Hebrew numerology because it combines the number of the world -4 with the number for God -3. God and the world together is 7 a perfect number in more ways than one.

1. I am the Bread of Life

(John 6:35): Jesus provides spiritual sustenance and life for all who believe in him.

2. I am the Light of the World

(John 8:12): He is the source of spiritual understanding and guides people away from spiritual darkness.

3. I am the Door of the Sheep

(John 10:7-9): Jesus is the only sure way to find spiritual protection, access to God, and salvation for his followers.

4. I am the Good Shepherd

(John 10:11): He cares for, guides, and protects his followers, laying down his life for them.

5. I am the Resurrection and the Life

(John 11:25): He is the source of spiritual and eternal life, offering victory over death for believers.

6. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

(John 14:6): Jesus is the exclusive path to the Father, the ultimate source of truth, and the origin of spiritual life.

7. I am the true Vine

(John 15:1): Believers are spiritually connected to him, and through this connection, they can bear "fruit," or spiritual growth, and receive his life.

John's gospel is arguably the most "spiritual" of the gospels and these series of sayings concerning two persons of the Trinity contain so much spiritual depth that each one could be meditated upon and prayed about for a lifetime and new insights discovered. Happy hunting!

**The prayer for Today.** Praying for the dead is a commonplace in Catholicism but very much rejected in Protestantism. This prayer by the great catholic saint Ignatius of Loyola appears to bridge that divide.

**Lord,**

**Welcome into your calm and peaceful kingdom**

**Those who have departed out of this present life**

**To be with you.**

**Grant them rest**

**And a place with the spirit of the just**

**And give them life that knows no age,**

**The reward that passes not away,**

**Through Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

Love and peace,

Martin

