

Dear friends,

Louise's brother who is severely disabled after a stroke was due to arrive for his very first trip away on his own. A direct train from Stockport to Tiverton Parkway was booked, assistance had been booked, and then on the very day of travel the train company decided they'd cancel the leg to Tiverton Parkway and end at Bristol! So Friday entailed a 5-hour round trip to Bristol Parkway to pick up Andrew. Louise adopted the role of carer for the duration and we had a lovely day at Sidmouth on Saturday on the prom.

On Sunday morning after the 8am service everything was set up to bring Andrew to church – he'd have loved to walk in under his own steam but unfortunately Andrew suffered a seizure on our sofa just as we were going to set off. This was a frightening experience for the uninitiated (me!) but Louise took it all in her stride as a Doctor. She said for me to go to St. Peter's and she would care for Andrew. By the time I got home Andrew was in his right mind but very weary but determined to travel into Budleigh for Sunday lunch at L'image.

The Music festival got underway and all three of us attended the Friday night concert that include Jess Gillam and the band of the Royal Marines. It was superb and there are a couple more concerts we are going to so we look forward to that.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Until the music festival is over, there is No Parking for permit holders at the church (except for services)

Sunday 6th July – 3rd after Trinity – Proper 9

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

Isaiah 66: 10-14. To the returning exiles to the ruined city of Jerusalem it was a depressing time. But Isaiah assures the people that the time will come that the city will be restored and will nurture its inhabitants using the motif of childbearing and suckling the baby.

Galatians 6: (1-6) 7-16. "You reap what you sow" is making the point that working selfishly to your own aggrandizement is fruitless in the end but working for the spirit and the good of the worshipping community will bear fruit when we have to face our maker in the end. Paul also writes a few words himself, taking the pen from his scribe, and comments on how big and wobbly his writing is which has led commentators to suggest that his "thorn in the flesh" was an eye problem.

Luke 10:1-11,16-20. I send you out as lambs amongst wolves implies that the work of evangelism is a risky business with no guarantee of success – some will respond and some won't. Travel light, be focussed (greet no-one on the road) and accept whatever food and lodging is provided as legitimate wages because you are doing God's work. Jesus was preparing to go where they had been so this could be seen as doing the groundwork of pre-evangelisation – preparing the way of the Lord.

Thought for Today

Anyone who is disabled or who you know is disabled knows that the world is not designed for you. Access to anywhere is difficult on many different levels. Travel is frustrating and fraught with difficulty. Most people instinctively realise this and the kindness of strangers is also very apparent and important. Many are prepared to go the extra mile but some only do so grudgingly. The young girls who helped on the railways were very kind and gracious but there are some who most definitely are not. I am surely not revealing any big secret in saying that there are different kinds of people out there. On a more general level, Christianity has been explained to me in the past as a process of becoming less self-centred and more God centred. In a Christian way, more God centred would mean more aware of the weak and disadvantaged – because that is how Jesus revealed God to be. More aware of God's wonderful world and everything in it. As a very general point, and I have no statistical evidence to back me up, society appears to have become more atomised and inward looking. I am led in the direction of believing that smart phones and social media are a major culprit. It depends on how they are used I suppose. The internet is both a blessing and a curse, but I get the impression that smart phones are used a lot to distract from real life – to retreat into oneself - and to off-set boredom and then it becomes a habit. In an odd way it confers a kind of significance to the user. I am not a lonely, disconnected, ordinary punter – I have friends, contacts, interests (much more interesting than you!) so just leave me alone to connect with the world through my phone and ironically disconnect from the world immediately around me. Of course, I may sound like an old fuddy duddy, but I find I increasingly sound like my Dad, God rest his soul. I think that is not a bad place to be – sounding like your Dad.

The Prayer for Today. At Mirfield, 25 years ago now, I was given a little statue of the “cure d’Ars” as a gift by one of my more catholic friends and I had no idea who he was but I subsequently found out that he is regarded as a model of priesthood and quiet saintly devotion. He is St. Jean Vianney, priest of the city of Ars in France and his example brought many people flocking to his church. His devotion was total and while it may be beyond us, it is certainly worth aspiring to.

**I love you, O my God
And my only desire is to love you
Until the last breath of my life.
I love you, O my infinitely lovable God,
And I would rather die loving you
Than live without loving you..
I love you Lord
And the only grace I ask is to love you eternally.
My God,
If my tongue cannot say in every moment
That I love you,
I want my heart to repeat it to you as often as I
Draw breath. Amen.**

Love and peace,
Martin