

Dear friends,

I don't know what you call a collection of clergy but two former vicars of St. Peter's were in the congregation, Ken Parry and Robert Charles, and also Fr. Robert Sellars, our former area Dean who is retiring from the CofE. Robert paid us a great complement when he said he didn't know where he could possibly go to get a serious, competent and solid church service around here anymore. That solidity and constancy means that we are attracting former Methodists, Roman Catholics and a growing number who are prepared to travel from Exmouth to experience what Robert called a "proper" service. I felt rather chuffed as you can imagine but in truth it's just what I was trained to do over 20 years ago and have kept doing regardless of all attempts to get me to do something else. Over 100 in the morning so no complaints!

Louise is back home – a bit jet lagged and frazzled after her ordeal. New passport applied for after being robbed, insurance forms doubtless filled in today, but on the plus side quite possibly the last time we hear the words "why don't we try Canada?"

Annual Vicarage Party. The annual bring-and-share party to foster social interaction between the three churches is this **Saturday 9th August from 3pm – 5pm**. It will take place in the house, only spilling out into the inner garden if the weather is fine. Bring a bottle of your favourite tippie. You'll only need something to sit on if we use the garden. Jane and Chris, our neighbours in Acer house have said anyone can park in their drive if "there is no room at the Inn" at ours. We look forward to seeing you!

Sunday 10th August – Trinity 8 – Proper 14

Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at both services at St. Peter's and I will preside at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively. Note: There is NO Evensong in August.

Genesis 15: 1-6. The verse "It was reckoned to him as righteousness" (verse 6) proved to be a pivotal verse for Paul in the Christian revelation when he was arguing his case for Grace being before works because Abraham was "justified" in the sight of God long before Moses appeared with the law. He was declared righteous because he had faith in God's promise to give him an heir in his old age and his descendants would be as many stars in the night sky.

Hebrews 11: 1-3, 8-16. Abraham is used as an example of faith which is being assured that our unseen and unrealised hopes are true and acting accordingly by allowing them to guide us. Abraham is the exemplar not only for the previous example of believing that he would Father a child in his old age but on believing the promises of God by leaving his safe existence in Ur and setting out towards the promised land.

Luke 12: 32-40. We are to use our faith in the assurances of God to act in faith by living simply, giving to charity and doing good works (not to earn God's love but as a response to his love for us). Gratitude is the well spring of Christian response to the love of God revealed in Christ. Grateful for our creation, preservation and redemption.

Thought for the Day

Seven years ago I was appointed as vicar of the RMC and one of my briefs was to provide solidity and peace, to provide calm after some fractious years and events. I think (who am I to say?) that has been achieved if I survey the scene. Three independently minded, functioning parishes which respects the Eucharist but where there is also a space for levity in the right places – unfussy Holiness with a light touch. Of course there will always be squabbles and minor crises – we are still only fallible human beings and can't control much of what happens to us after all.

What I suppose I wanted to create was communities that would engage in Holy worship and then allow that worship to change them. The Christian life can be characterised by the word we translate as “repentance” in English. Metanoia is a Greek word that means the total change of mind body and spirit - a change we describe as becoming more Christ-like. The goal is nothing less than what the Orthodox church call Theosis – a oneness with God. Seems a long way off to you? Perhaps or perhaps not. Whilst change or “bearing fruit” as a result of believing the gospel in the aim, that is based on continually engaging with an unchanging and solid “re-presentation” of the Eucharist every Sunday and sometimes mid-week. To be continually confronted with the one eternal sacrifice of Jesus on behalf of us all is the best way to ensure that eventually we start to turn. I believe that we have three communities that are all on the move, at various stages in their journey towards God.

The Prayer for Today. Not often do we think about Native American spirituality, which with its affinity to nature, and the Divine indwelling sounds vaguely Celtic. Here is a prayer from the Chinook tribe.

May all I say and all I think,

Be in harmony with thee,

God within me, God beyond me,

Maker of the trees.

Love and peace,

Martin