

Dear friends,

There was a lovely feel to the Sunday morning services and I preached on John's gospel, which I love, because he sets in lovely prose the inner meaning of the "Jesus event", that our lives are not to be overcome by God's Spirit but our earthy passions and lives are to be enhanced by exposing them to God's love – OK – sermon over – I hope everyone is getting a lot out of the Olympics, world-wide friendly competition where the best man or woman wins. It is wall-to-wall at the moment, and you could never watch everything but Paris is providing a wonderful backdrop to the event, especially (for us) the Sacre Coeur basilica in Montmartre because that is where I proposed to Louise!

The figs are starting to come out, but it is an annual race to get to them before the blackbirds. Wish us luck.

Remember there is no Choral Evensong during August.

Sunday 11th August – Trinity 11 – Proper 14

Rev'd. Colin Randall will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's and I will be presiding at both services at All Saints East Budleigh and St. Michael's Otterton at 9.30am and 11am respectively.

1 Kings 19: 4-8. This incident ironically takes place directly after a great victory against the followers of Baal, so really shows up the contradictions of being human. Even after a great triumph, because everything doesn't proceed exactly as one wished we can be apt to collapse into a well of despair where everything seems pointless. Fortunately, God doesn't allow Elijah to wallow in self-pity but picks him up. It is only when Elijah looks away from himself and towards God that he mood lifts and changes.

Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2. Some good advice that never goes out of season, particularly about anger. Not allowing it to fester, but in forgiving people just as Christ has forgiven you. No problem from "is" to "ought" here. But though hard, we all know that forgiveness is psychologically beneficial. Usually the only one harmed by being angry is you yourself and it eats you up, poisoning everything you do and think.

John 6: 35, 41-51. I am not going to pretend that this passage is easily understood. I have read loads of words on this piece, and different Christian denominations hold differing interpretations. Suffice to say that Communion with Christ (spiritual or physical) is communion with God. And as we are told by St. Paul "God is over all, through all and in all" and "in him we live and move and have our being". So, that being the case, in faith the reality of God is present in the Eucharist and so intentional communion with Him is real. I fully understand why the Orthodox call the Eucharist the Holy Mysteries because they contain far more truth than can be readily appreciated by our mortal brains. It is in part intellectual knowledge but also a visceral knowledge that there is more going on than can be readily grasped by the mind.

Thought for the Day

Riots on the streets of so many British cities expose the barely concealed rage of so many people lurking just below the surface. Put that together with 110 wars raging around the world (according to the Geneva academy), a housing crisis, a health crisis, a financial crisis, even potholes in all the roads just leave us thinking that the world and the UK in particular is broken. It is no wonder that children today, glued as they are to their smartphones feeding them extra unregulated sexual, violent and

psychologically damaging content have so many mental health problems. It almost seems like a logical response to such doom and gloom and misery spoon fed to us on a minute-by-minute basis. But wake up to the relative peace and security of our own environment, remembering that most people are basically peaceful and law abiding, and resting on the solid ground of internal peace and faith in God, the world and the universe, we can negotiate the chaos around us better than anyone. The peace of God is an internal peace that can maintain a still and calm centre amidst what is presented to us as a world falling apart. That is the glue that keeps Christian communities together and happy and thriving. I've noted before that my favourite poem is "If" by Rudyard Kipling and the it's all good fine advice on how to live a life of character but it starts with the line "If you can keep your head when all around you are losing theirs and blaming it on you" speaks of keeping a cool, calm centre amidst others who have little self-control and is first rate advice. All the prophets, sages and seers across the ages have all lived through much more chaos than us but maintained that calm focus on what is really important and for the Christian the best parables to bear in mind are either the "walking on water" sign or Jesus asleep in the boat during a storm. Both point to God being the Lord of all and is the calm centre amongst the storms of life.

The Prayer for the Day. I rarely (If ever) get a request to include a certain prayer, but I did this week and it is this one. It is from the old Sarum primer

**God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at my end, and at my departing.**

Love and peace,
Martin