

Dear friends,

My Typhoid and Tetanus jabs hurt more and for longer than expected and I've got to go back for my Hepatitis A booster. I wasn't allowed to drive for ten minutes so stopped off for a coffee and a chat with the ladies preparing for Rendezvous which was lovely. It was raining again on our day off but we had to go into Exeter to make an international money transfer to Malaysia in Singapore Dollars. It turns out we could have done it all on our phones but the young man in the bank patiently walked us through it – our excuse is that we are old and decrepit!

Raining again on Sunday which may have depressed numbers in the morning but not in the evening for Choral Evensong which attracted 49 people – and on this gloomy evening I felt strangely relaxed – that is, more relaxed than I usually am when having to sing Evensong. This is probably due to the fact the mammoth task of replacing all the orders of service had been accomplished. One or two typographical issues but nothing too bad. The quakers deliberately put an error into everything they produce to emphasise that only God is perfect – well that's my excuse and I'm sticking to it.

Sunday 15th September – Trinity 16 – proper 19

Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at both services at St. Peter's, and I will preside at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30 and 11.00am respectively.

Isaiah 50: 4-9a. Even though the word "Servant" doesn't appear this is often called the third "servant song" in Isaiah and is the most intensely personal. Where elsewhere the servant could be Israel itself or some other group, this is applied to a person and references his tongue, ears, back, cheeks, face and beard. Christians have always applied this in a prophetic way to Jesus and his passion.

James 3: 1-12. James's target is the destructive power of words. "It's good to talk" is a well-known maxim but as we know from social media, twitter storms, and the febrile current climate surrounding contentious topics, words spoken either carelessly or without thought can cause untold harm. In my experience, thinking first and speaking later is good advice and as your mum used to tell you "If you've got nothing good to say, don't say anything".

Mark 8: 27-38. The confession of Peter is here in its earliest form (Matthew and Luke had not yet been written). No mention of Peter the rock here and just the unusual (to our ears at least) instruction to keep this information quiet for now. In wanting to protect

Jesus, Peter is called Satan – quite a rebuke. Thwarting the messianic mission which must entail suffering and death, is all part and parcel of God’s plan leading all the way up to the resurrection as the sign and seal of the Kingdom of God’s ultimate triumph over evil. Followers are told they must take up their own cross (a punishment reserved for sedition against the state) if they want to qualify as being one of Jesus’ true followers.

Gift day. On this Saturday the 14th September in the morning, I, our treasurer, and our gift aid overseer will all be in St. Peter’s church, between 9am until noon ready to receive financial gifts to the church. I, Tony and Judith and others no doubt will be there to receive, ask questions and talk about the financial situation. While regular monthly giving is preferred (and there will be someone ready to sign you up if that’s what you decide to do), many people like to give in one lump sum – or both! Whichever way it arrives, be sure we are truly grateful. As the largest church in Budleigh Salterton, we can only make sure that we can continue our ministry by ensuring that the gap between our annual expenditure and our income is narrowed considerably. Of course, we do have reserves, but our reserves will not last forever.

Thought for the Day

At our home group we are just about to start going through the book “The purpose driven life” which carries the subtitle “What on earth am I here for?” by Rich Warren. It’s an old book now, but very popular and I’ve never done it – though Louise has. The first chapter is called “It’s not all about you”. Gaining Perspective and getting our priorities right underlies the religious quest of every faith tradition. For the theist (Believer in God), this should be first nature stuff. We acknowledge a supreme being, to whom we owe our very existence and to whom we entrust our end. To greater or lesser degrees we entrust our current life to his ongoing grace and providence and mercy. This engenders a basic response of worship, which seeks to thank and praise God for being our spiritual Father and wanting to get close to Him. We communicate with Him through prayer and contemplation, inviting Him to be an active participant in our lives. Accepting Jesus as God incarnate on earth, we seek to do God’s will by studying and getting as close to Jesus as we can as a way of discerning God’s nature, his will and his purposes. The central premise of Christianity is that on the one hand – it is not all about us personally – we are one of an infinitesimal collection of atoms collected together in myriad different forms and yet, we paradoxically have an innate eternal worth as a loved child of the living God.

The prayer for Today is a prayer by Anselm (1013 – 1109).

**My god,
I pray that I may love you and know you,
That I may rejoice in you.
And if I may not do so fully in this life
Let me go steadily on
To the day when I come to that fullness.
Let the knowledge of you increase in me here,
And there let it come to its fullness.
Let your love grow in me here,
And there let it be fulfilled
So that here my joy may be in a great hope,
And there in full reality.**

Love and peace
Martin