Dear friends,

Watching the Remembrance Commemoration from the Albert Hall on Saturday evening set the scene for the two services at the war memorials of East Budleigh and Budleigh Salterton and also the Remembrance themed Eucharist at All Saints and the Royal British Legion service at Budleigh Salterton in the afternoon. I'm glad to say that bar a few logistical hiccups they day went very well indeed – apart from me getting absolutely soaked and pretty cold traipsing up to the Budleigh war memorial facing a cold forbidding sea.

Just as importantly Louise's brother Matthew is home from hospital and learning to walk again and adjust to a new reality. There was a brief hiatus when he had to be taken back to hospital for a Magnesium infusion but he is now back home again.

In Louise and I's mammoth scrabble tournament that started being recorded on Holy Island (that stay was a wedding present from Catholic friends)in 2014. After a long time with me being in the lead, Louise has nudged ahead 1093 to 1092. By the way, scrabble sets only last about 1000 games before they need replacing – who knew?

In November, because of Remembrance Sunday and the Advent Carol service Choral Evensong is moved to the third Sunday of the month and this will be the pattern is subsequent years so this Sunday at 6pm we will have Evensong.

The 16th November is also Mission Sunday at St. Peter's so we have a video address from Bishop Martin Gordon who is based in war-torn Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Sunday 16th November – 2nd before Advent

I will be presiding at both services in the morning at St. Peter's and also choral Evensong at 6pm. Reverend Colin Randall will preside at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30 and 11am respectively.

Malachi 4: 1-2a. Malachi, means both "messenger" or an "Angel" of course and Malachi is looking forwards to the "Day of the Lord" the time of great reckoning. The Sun of righteousness is interesting as the sun dispels shadows and brings everything to light so that good and evil can be judged.

2 Thessalonians 3: 6-13. "Anyone unwilling to work shall not eat" is directed towards believers within the church, not society as a whole so can't be used as a kind of right-wing political solution to social problems. It is more to do with how Christians treat each other. The Greek word translated as idleness could also be translated as irresponsible. Why some are lazy is not addressed but may be because so many early Christians expected an imminent return of Jesus, that this induced a kind of spiritual torpor.

Luke 21: 5-13. As some try and use these words as portents of the future, Luke when he wrote it was already writing about the past – the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD70. There is an eschatological (looking towards the Day of the Lord) focus of course and Jesus warns us not to be taken in by false prophets, but even

before the destruction of Jerusalem and long after it, Christians will be persecuted. We are to show the same endurance shown by the saints and Martyrs and in the end, we will be vindicated.

Thought for the Day

The Director General and the head of news have both resigned from the BBC as the scandal of reportedly left-wing biased reporting starts to take its toll. The doctoring of one of Donald Trump's speeches on the day of the Capitol riots to make it look as if he incited it, which was the exact opposite of what he actually said appears to have been the final straw. As a small "c" conservative I could make a great deal of this and it might be a prelude to great gloating over their now obviously contentious claims to impartiality but actually it just makes me feel sad that yet another great cornerstone of this country, the BBC, has been exposed as not what most people thought it was. It just adds to the general feeling that everything in this country is falling apart, acting in bad faith or simply incompetent. This has resulted in a huge polarisation in society, politically, socially and culturally – not so bad as in the USA but getting dangerously closer to their experience. I for one hopes the BBC can correct itself for the good of us all. According to some reports their news channels have been overtaken by GBNews and Sky news as the most watched news channel in the UK. Misinformation is a plague of modern society, and I know it is so hard to keep your personal political views under wraps. I try very hard to avoid all politics in my sermons because I know there will be people in every congregation from far left to far right and everything in-between so you are bound to antagonise someone. Jesus loves us as individuals and died for each one of us regardless of who anyone votes for. The pulpit for me is not a soapbox for airing my politics but a rather sacred forum where to the best of my ability I try and communicate God's word as far as I understand it. For daring to try and speak/explain the words of God is a very scary thing to presume to do and if I dwelt on that aspect long enough it would put me off saying anything at any time. Honesty and integrity is what people expect from a preacher and while our leanings, prejudices and chips on our shoulders does occasionally show itself we should still try and self-edit whenever possible. For me, worship is God-centred not Me-centred or congregation-centred.

The Prayer for Today

is by Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was in many ways very political but in one analysis simply wanted the Christian church to be free to spread God's word wherever that lead and not to be used as a tool of National Socialism. This was written while awaiting execution by the Nazis for his part in the Hitler assassination plot.

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray
And to concentrate my thoughts on you.
I cannot do this alone.
In me there is darkness,
But with you there is light.
I am lonely,
But you do not leave me.
I am feeble in heart
But with you there is help.
I am restless,

But with you there is peace.
In me there is bitterness,
But with you there is patience.
I do not understand your ways,
But you know the way for me.
Restore me to liberty,
And enable me so to live now
That I may answer before you and before me.
Lord, whatever this day may bring
Your name be praised.
Amen.

Love and peace,
Martin