

Dear friends,

Sunday was a particularly busy day with three eucharists in the morning, a Baptism in the afternoon and Choral Evensong in the early evening. It was also finals day for the men's singles at Wimbledon (I managed to catch the end of the match) and the Euros in the evening where we were beaten by Spain. Thankfully I could relax during the football which didn't kick off until 8pm. Mind you, I slept well on Sunday night!

**Lord Clinton's memorial service** was on Monday where I was asked to join the procession and take some tokens that represent the three churches in the RMC, so I decided upon the three parish mags that each church produces. Alongside me was Anne Radcliffe who was recently awarded the BEM in the King's honours list for services to the people of Otterton. It was a splendid affair with 900 people packed into Exeter Cathedral.

**It is raining again** today and the forecast for the weekend is pretty miserable, but our annual vicarage garden party will still go ahead – except possibly NOT in the garden. We'll adapt to whatever conditions are thrown at us and soldier on regardless – we are British after all!

### **Sunday 21st July – Trinity 8 – Proper 11**

I am presiding at both services at St. Peter's and Rev'd Jean Burrows will be presiding at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30am and 11am respectively. I will then also preside at the Civic service at 3pm on Sunday afternoon to which everybody is welcome to attend as it is a civic occasion that celebrates the town of Budleigh Salterton and all that goes on in it.

**Jeremiah 23: 1-6.** Using the image of a shepherd to denote kings and rulers has a long history in the near East with Pharaohs in Egypt also depicted carrying a shepherd's crook as a sign of office. Translation of this piece is difficult because the script is corrupted (and different verses were added through the centuries) so it is not clear whether the bad shepherds were simply negligent or deliberately engineered the scattering of the people of Israel. What is notable however is that it is the Israeli rulers and not foreign rulers and their armies that are being blamed for their plight.

**Ephesians 2: 11-22.** The words Paul uses here form the basis of the introduction to the "peace" that I use in every Eucharist. Paul uses it to emphasize that the barrier between Jew and Gentile is now broken down – that there is one humanity made

possible through Christ who died for all mankind. This peace with God has very human implications for forging peace between different religious and ethnic groups, and giving and internal peace also within ourselves.

**Mark 6: 30-34, 53-56.** A few overlapping themes here including the need for periods of spiritual rest and also the recurring theme of the people needing a shepherd because they were spiritually lost and aimless. Peace, in its wider context of health and wholeness is what is desired most by the crowd and people clamoured to have their illnesses cured. Physical ailments were also what excluded many from normal social interaction and from their religion, so Jesus' healing miracles had an enormous social impact on bringing people together.

### Thought for the Day.

I have heard football described as a religion over the years because of the single-minded focus and sense of belonging it encourages with communal singing, uncritical, unswerving support for "your" team, and the sense of euphoria it can produce (OK – then not very like the CofE then).

Of course, just like religion, it also can produce bigotry and unhinged hatred of the "others" which sometimes can descend into violence.

In the USA, the two political poles, have also become almost like religions in that sense, often motivating people to criminal acts. The attempted assassination of Donald Trump, which killed one other person and wounded two others let's not forget, is just the latest example of unbridled hatred of the other. Republican/Democrat read Sunni/Shia or Hindu/Moslem or perhaps in darker times Catholic/Protestant.

However passionate we are about our belief systems there must be room for a proper humility that we may be not as 100% right as we think we are, and within the Christian revelation that all must be encompassed within the law of love. Do unto others as you would have them do to you. I was brought up watching old black and white films like the Bogart classics in which a rather rotund man called Sidney Greenstreet was a stock character. In one such film I'll always remember his phrase "There's not enough kindness in the world". That's what we all need, to calm down and show a bit more kindness in every situation.

**The Prayer for Today** is a blessing from the Celtic tradition.

**May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,**

**May the rains fall softly upon your fields,  
Until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.**

Love and peace,  
Martin