

Dear friends,

After the two morning services we celebrated at Paul and Penny Kurowski's 45th wedding anniversary in the boiling sun in their beautiful garden. The car failed its MOT on Friday which meant we had to get back to East Budleigh by bus. Luckily, we can pick it up today so it's good to have two cars sometimes.

We have entered a time when lots of people either go on holiday or are on grandparent duty and the choir take August off as well so there is no Choral Evensong this month, and no school assemblies (or collective worship as we are encouraged to call it nowadays).

But the worship of the church goes on regardless of what is happening around it so.....

Sunday 4th August – Trinity 10 – Proper 13

I will be presiding at both services at St. Peter's. Rev'd Chris Cant will preside at All Saints and John Archibald will preside at St. Michael's.

Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15. Apparently, quails arrive in large numbers from Sudan and Ethiopia to Northern Sinai in August/September. Manna is a secretion from the Tamarisk bush assisted by the sting and secretion of a tree louse. The religious lessons being taught here are to gather more on the Friday to cover the Sabbath (not yet instituted) and whether you gather a lot, you have none left over and if you gather little there is always enough – not a charter for laziness but the eternal lesson that God always fulfils a person's needs.

Ephesians 4: 1-16. A digest of Pauline ideas have led some to doubt that this letter is by the hand of Paul himself, for all the terms used appear in other letters. The Ascension and Pentecost are linked through Christ being all in all and equipping the saints for their respective roles in ministry. This is necessary for the smooth functioning of the church as a whole. This was written aeons before all the splits and in-fighting that characterised the Christian church in later years so his concern for a truly catholic smooth running church is well founded.

John 6: 24-35. "I Am the bread of life" is how I finished last week's sermon and it appears now because Jesus got upset with people not recognizing the "sign" that leads us to spiritual truth but just because they wanted a full belly. Jesus goes on to amplify the sign of the multiplication of the bread and fish by relating it back to the multiplication story we heard in our opening story from the Hebrew scriptures regarding the quails and the manna from heaven. That all comes from God and the original sign was mistakenly attributed to Moses rather than God himself.

Thought for the Day

When you pray, pray "Our Father". So says Jesus himself. So, just to clarify, with all prayer being Trinitarian one can legitimately pray to Jesus or the Holy Spirit but Jesus himself never asked for worship in his life – that came afterwards as a result of the resurrection. He was bringing people back to the one true God. This is why in every Eucharist the prayers are directed to the Father, through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our experience of God has meant that we see God in Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but you can't go wrong when you direct your prayers to the sourceless source of all things in official worship. Personal prayer is slightly different when as I've already said you might direct

your prayers towards Jesus or the Spirit (or through Mary or one of the saints if you are catholic) but in official worship it is best to keep it to the Father.

Of course, in modern times we have to address the question of gendered language and although in essence God is beyond gender we have to accept the fact that Jesus was male and he referred to God as his Father. If we also accept that the Spirit is a female word in Greek (Sophia) we attribute male and female terms to the roles that they carry out. I have always found it helpful to consider the yin and yang thesis taken from Chinese tradition that all life is a balance between Male and Female energies and generally speaking the Male is active and the female passive energies (though not completely).

The Prayer for the day is that beautiful hymn, a prayer to the Spirit that will lead us to know the Trinity

**1 Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire
and lighten with celestial fire;
thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.**

**2 Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love;
enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our mortal sight.**

**3 Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but one;
that through the ages all along
this may be our endless song:**

**4 Praise to thine eternal merit,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Love and peace,

Martin