

Pollution

I was very worried to read this week that certain roads in Brixton, London have already exceeded their total pollution quotient for 2017 by the end of the first week of this New Year!



Pollution in terms of Nitrous Oxide emissions which are mainly belched out by Diesel vehicles. EU rules dictate a maximum NO₂ concentration of 200 micrograms per cubic metre cannot be exceeded for more than 18 hours over the course of a year. It's not just Brixton but also many other parts of our cities. London is one of the most polluted cities in the world. If I lived there...well I just wouldn't! (*But both my Sons work there*).

Over Christmas we visited family including dear Imad. He lives in a fifth-floor apartment facing onto Euston Road, very near to the Post-Office/Telecom Tower, depicted above (can you make it out?). He bought the lease years ago before London property prices sky-rocketed. It's a pleasant flat with triple glazing to keep out the thundering traffic noise from below (and aircraft roar above). I asked him to take me out onto the balcony for some (not very) fresh air and one could just by touching the railings pick-up thick deposits of soot, which he assured me are periodically cleaned away. Soot from diesel engines. Imad said it had got worse, with more traffic and severe congestion – which itself exacerbates pollution.

Pollution is a concern. I have been opposed to the 'European' dieselisation of our domestic car fleet since the late 1980's when I purchased some cars for our company. On paper diesels were cheaper to run and had a higher mpg...but as the engines aged they produced ever increasing amounts of emissions and I took us back to unleaded petrol cars, as soon as possible. New technology has resulted in much more efficient and cleaner petrol cars, whereas diesel cars still produce comparatively many more harmful emissions, especially nitrous oxide and soot.

Where is all this going? Into our brain tissue apparently - and now scientists are speculating that the lodging of minute soot particles into our brain tissue may be a cause of inexplicable rates of increase of maladies such as Dementia. Research is still in its infancy but common sense says that human lungs were created to breathe in pure air and not soot (and smoke).

Pollution is not a modern problem – I am just old enough to remember thick winter smog's, even in the London suburbs of Bromley where I was born. Smokeless coal zones were instituted to cut coal smoke – but in reality, it

was Natural Gas and central heating that reduced emissions because we modernised away from solid-fuel use. We need to move forward again with our technology and I hope city dwellers will lobby their Mayor's for much tighter regulations to reduce the unacceptable pollution hazards.

I wonder what legal action will take place against Volkswagen (et al) who falsified their emissions and performance test statistics for 1.2 million cars sold here? Compensation (£3,000?) is due for the owners but what about for us 'breathers'. Did you know it costs £1,000's to replace the Diesel Particulate Exhaust Filter which bungs up faster than the now discredited manufacturers projections? I also wonder if cleaner technologies are being suppressed because of the vested interests of major corporations and oil-producers?

Does the bible have anything to say on pollution? Yes, it addresses the whole issue of purity. Purity is more than physical, it is spiritual. If we pay attention to what might poison our delicate bodies and fragile environment we should be even more careful as to what infects our minds and afflicts our spirit! Bible verses that you might like to ponder are: Matthew 15:19-20 & 23:25-26 and also Romans 7:13 & 24. In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 30:2-10; Numbers 35:33-34; Jeremiah 2:7 & Isaiah 24:4-6.

Also, in Genesis, there is the whole 'Garden of Eden' vs 'The Wilderness' theme to consider. The whole issue of what we do with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge challenges us. Progress, development and expansion (growth) at the expense of environment and personal righteous happiness is the balance we have to address as Christians seeking after Eden but actually living in a wilderness. We are here through our own selfishness (The Fall).

In our strivings to be 'church' we must remember the Five Marks of Mission, of which the fifth is equally vital:

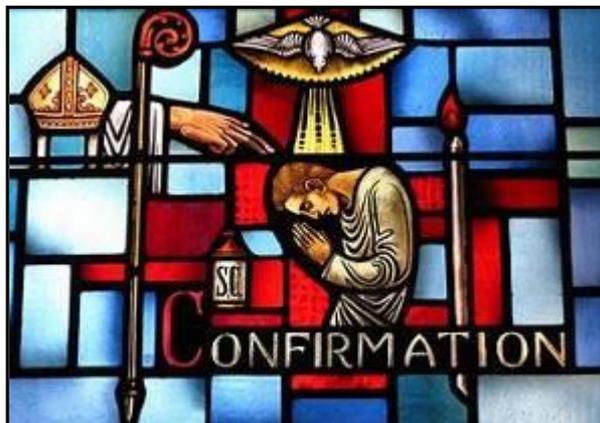
- To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth

As I become a Grandparent the thought strikes me that I can no longer blame past generations for the way things are – it is now my generation who should take responsibility for planet Earth.

One final thought – The fullness of God is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Latin word Spiritus is the translation of the Hebrew word for Breath. We should thus strive to inhale good and pure air – holy breath, as God intended. Diesel, Petrol – what we all need in 2017 onwards is Electric; not powered by heavily polluting Power Stations but by the sun itself, or should I say, the Son Himself!

NB. Our church P.V. panels have now produced over 26,000 kilowatt hours. A.R.

Confirmation & Service



I have been teaching Confirmation to four of our youngsters since Autumn and now they are ready and willing to be Confirmed. Our area Bishop Karen (of Sherborne) has kindly arranged to come on Easter Saturday, 15th April at 6pm to lead us on what will be a very special occasion. Confirmation, in a sense, completes what began at our candidate's baptism as infants. Their parents promised therein to care for their children's spiritual growth and thus give them the opportunity to know God's love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Sadly, we know many parents do not take the baptismal promises as seriously as we would like – whilst still wanting the joy of a Baptism (Christening) they do not want to make the commitment to being an active part of a church. In my experience though, parents will be more open to an education with a distinct Christian ethos for their children and will feel included by coming to church for School services.

Some churches have reacted to this apparently casual approach to faith by refusing child baptism unless parents are reasonably committed Christians. They force them to attend church in order to get the ceremony they desire (and perhaps gain admission to their popular church school). I don't think that is right in principle but accept it does work in some cases. For faith to have meaning it surely must be freely professed and not forced.

Other churches only baptise adults and simply offer a blessing/naming or dedication ceremony for infants. They seek to keep together what we have traditionally separated into two parts. For this reason, adults cannot normally be baptised in The Church of England without being Confirmed as well.

Getting young adults (11+) to undertake Confirmation classes has proved increasingly difficult in recent decades as people have become increasingly de-churched. We lose contact with youth. Alpha Courses etc. have served well to evangelise the adult 'disconnected' and also to refresh and invigorate the faith of those who may feel they have forgotten what they had learnt.

Being the established church, The Church of England by law, offers a baptism to any child living within a parish. We provide church for everyone living in the locality, all are members of the church even if they do not attend! For us, Baptism is understood to be the starting point for the life of faith. We will honour any approach in the locality by parents on behalf of their children. We try to steer the parents into the church when, let's be honest, there are many competing demands on their time and attention.

The church tries to maintain contact with children and parents by sending out baptism anniversary cards and the provision of appropriate pre-school worship at 'Bells & Biscuits'* on Tuesdays and 'Messy Church' sessions on Sundays, as well as weekly School Assemblies and School Services in church. For our present Confirmation candidates, Isobel, Ailsa, Marc and Luc, COSMIC's (Sunday School) has been absolutely key and we thank Sarah and her helpers for their sustained loving care for the Children of St Mary's in Church. What a blessed ministry they exercise! How precious are the youth within the church! We pray for more youngsters in church.

We thus place great importance on Confirmation – it is a sacrament of the church and a bishop must preside. The baptised are brought to the bishop to Confirm them and this involves the laying on of hands and a prayer; "Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit". Confirmation continues what was begun at baptism, building on its foundation, building the walls of faith through worship, prayer and bible study. It is a lifelong commitment made by a 'maturing Christian' in the practice of our faith.

Confirmation is something to be celebrated and treasured; I anticipate that some of the Liturgy of Light that we normally do at dawn on Easter Sunday and the renewal of our baptismal vows might be done with Bishop Karen. We can also 'break' our Lenten fast in the evening at the party that will surely follow the Confirmation Service. We might even have a lie-in on Easter Sunday – or do something different!

During a recent class the candidates were a bit nonplussed by the idea that to be Confirmed was to become a servant (slave) of Christ and yet one reckoned that Ordination was the next step after Confirmation. Pray that this is a word of prophecy from them. We have sent several Ordinands from this parish and we should always hope to send more.

Ordination is a calling to serve Christ and His church in a special, very visible way. This year we are looking forward to Peter-tide, Saturday 1st July and the Ordination of Deacons at Salisbury Cathedral. By that time (Rev) Ruth Wells and her family will be with us in the parish – coming to serve her title post here as a Curate in Training.

What a lot we have to look forward to – renewing our hope and giving us life!

Yours in Christ

Andrew – Vicar of West Moors

* May I take this opportunity to thank once again Sue Coombes who recently stepped down from running (serving) 'Bells and Biscuits' after several decades. Whilst we were glad for her promotion at the hospital, the Tuesday Church does miss her presence. Our love and deep appreciation, Sue. X.

Vicar's Vista April 2017

Surrexit means Surrexit!

“What is truth?”, Pilate asks of Jesus.

‘Do not write Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews but, “This man said, I am the King of the Jews”’. (Said the Chief Priests)

I am writing about *truth and meaning*.



Is truth absolute or is it relative to time and context? What do you feel?

The very nature of truth is in question. The irony implicit in these two gospel quotations is huge and is only fully appreciated in retrospect and with studied deliberation. I'm very mindful of the present media debate surrounding the so-called 'Post Truth Society' full of 'Fake News', that we inhabit.

Everything written and recorded has a context – its original context and the immediate, in the here and now. That meaning may be veiled or lost in time.

So what do I *mean* in writing Surrexit means Surrexit! ?

The literal meaning of Surrexit (Latin) means he has arisen (from Surgō – to 'get up from below'). This article, written by a vicar, for a church magazine, is timed to coincide with the Easter Season. The true story of Christ's betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection is re-told and to some extent re-lived. In the Christian context then Surrexit means Resurrection, rising from death.

My deliberate pun on 'Brexit' also has particular contextual meaning now - but in future will have lost the richness and meaning it presently imparts.

'Surrexit means Surrexit!' in the current context of 'Brexit means Brexit' is intended to provoke the idea that whilst we want and believe in resurrection, we probably do not fully know what it means...yet. Just how to 'wise-up' to the *Truth* and negotiate the *Way* is a matter for hot debate, viz last weeks' General Synod impasse on issues of human sexuality. The resurrection of Christ is however the absolute *truth* of our faith that brings ultimate *meaning* to billions of Christians. It is where we are going; renewed (raised) *Life* now, and finally 'exiting' to resurrection life with God.

Meanwhile Western Society is grappling with the phenomenon of Post-truth. Oxford Dictionaries has declared 'Post-truth' as its word of the year for 2016 and may become one of the defining words of our time. Post-truth is defined as an adjective relating to circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than emotional appeals. Where are the facts, what can we rely on? Society is adrift at sea, without compass.

As a 'Remainer' I fear that the British move to exit the European Community is based on emotion and gut-feel rather than objective reason. In the USA election campaign, we truly witnessed Post-truth at work. They elected a non-politician to be their top politician! He is demonstrating himself to be a master of Post-Truth! He now bars the BBC & CNN from his news briefings because he says they are faking the news! Woe to all who distort & deceive with their fairy story approach to truth and woe to voters who are taken in by them! 'Drain their swamp; wall and lock them up! It's great, really great'. Is it really? See Ecclesiastes 9:17 and Matthew 18:7 for biblical *truths*.

Fake news is influencing things. It began as 'Spin' but now it is fake or false. 'Tall stories' are set loose on the internet, snowballing onto media by exciting huge numbers of 'hits'. Veracity is secondary to message. By the time the 'falseness' is unveiled, society has moved on and is unwittingly residually influenced. I wonder where was truth during the UK referendum campaign?

No, the economy didn't collapse – just the value of the pound which will cost us dear. I note Brexit Minister, David Davis, is now saying that immigration post-Brexit will have to continue at present levels for a substantial time to support the British economy. It's ironic how reality is finally surfacing. Did the majority really believe the British contributions to the E.C. would be passed to fund the NHS. So much on both sides was Post-truth. It is clearly going to cost billions to Brexit. Brexit means Brexit. Yes, we really are leaving; we are very unsure where we are going! We have defined the title, but not the plot.

I've done two primary school assemblies this week and have been talking about story. Children love story, they readily shared their favourites. I held up the world's best-selling story book - The Bible - the story of God (His-story). Some of the stories therein are true and some are not, yet they all serve to convey *meaning and truth*. I retold the story of the proverbial wise and foolish men building their houses. It is engaging and memorable, typical of Jesus' rabbinical parables. "Is it a true story?", a child enquired. Believers know that parables are not literally true but are packed with truth; truth that is apparent to the wise and yet remains veiled to the foolish. The 'house' of *meaning and truth* of the peoples of former times, and *meaning and truth* in our time, and *meaning and truth* for future times is something built on historic foundations and yet requiring maintenance (reappraisal) from time to time. That's what I consider the General Synod were engaged in, but did they lose the plot?

Understanding and proclaiming Godly truth is a demanding process that challenges us all, especially on matters where present society has different values and contexts to those of the past. Our truth is different on issues of gender, sexuality, slavery and governance. In God we trust! May he help us discern 'what is truth', who 'the king' really is and to be raised to life in Him.

Surrexit means Surrexit! – that's absolute, not abstract, relative, or Post-truth.

Vicar's Vista May 2017

Surrexit Christus, Alleluia!

Christ is risen (resurrected),
Alleluia!

This is the proclamation that the traditional church especially makes on Easter Day, although every Sunday is also a celebration of The Resurrection of Christ Jesus,



This year we gathered on Easter Eve (Saturday) for a Vigil Service leading to the Confirmation of some youngsters including our very own Isobel and Ailsa Middleton and Marc and Luc Collins. The Bishop of Sherborne, The Rt Revd. Karen Gorham presided. Much of what we normally do at sunrise on Sunday *'After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning'* (Matt:28:1) we did on Saturday. The gathering around a fire in vigil - the lighting of the new Paschal Candle and taking it into the church as 'the Light of Christ' and the Renewal of our Baptismal Vows. Then the Confirmations were followed by a breaking of our Lenten Fast by way of what I grandly called a 'Banquet'. During their Confirmation Classes (we did some 15 sessions from last September), I had promised that we would have a big celebration at the end – a banquet not a buffet – for all their hard work

Confirmation is an adult profession of faith of belief and trust in God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. It is an adult, personal commitment to reject all rebellion against God and daily turn to and submit to Christ. Promises are made by parents at Baptism; these are now owned by the youngsters for themselves and that brings great joy for the entire church.

Bishop Karen told each of the newly Confirmed that they had been called by their name and been given the grace and gift of the Holy Spirit to be all that God has created them to be. God is in them by His Spirit and will help them to bring forth the fruits of the spirit inasmuch as they remain faithful to their calling. The Christian Way is sealed in love and bonded in God's peace. How exciting the life, full of potential and promise that lies ahead, and how wonderful the eternal promise to be part of the Resurrection life of Christ. Surrexit truly means Surrexit – that's what I've been saying in this season.

You are mostly aware that during Lent we suddenly lost my beloved father to a brain haemorrhage. He was taken unwell and after several days of decline fell into a deep sleep, from which he never roused. We are saddened by our loss but firm in our faith in the resurrection, and are at peace. We would like to thank you all for the comfort of your expressions of love and condolences.

Vicar's Vista June 2017

A View from Iona

No, it's not the snap General Election that has driven me into the wilderness of Iona!



Iona is a small Island a short passenger ferry ride from Fionnphort at the end of the island of Mull, itself reached by ferry from Oban, on the West Coast of Scotland. I've managed to reach this remote place after a twelve-hour drive. It is not a Retreat Centre they say, but I'm on a form of Retreat, spending a week studying Celtic Christianity. It certainly feels a long way from Dorset.

This is a picture of the Abbey. It is one of the oldest and most important religious places in Britain. It is a place of Pilgrimage and some of you have told me of your visits. The Abbey was founded by Saint Columba of Ireland and through here flowed (Celtic) Christianity into Scotland and onwards.

Columba arrived here in 563 with twelve companions and founded a monastery. The building I'm in is the third on the site. The ruins from the 1200's were rebuilt in 1938 by what was to become The Iona Community, founded by Rev'd George MacLeod. These days some of you will know John Bell who is a principal in the Iona Community, a broadcaster and writer, often heard on Thought for the Day on Radio 4.

I visited Saint Cuthbert's tomb in Durham Cathedral and Lindisfarne Island some five years ago. Lindisfarne, in Northumbria was founded by monks from Iona in 635 and was the place that the Venerable Bede lived in 690 meeting Adomnan, the visiting Abbott of Iona. So, it's interesting to now be in Iona, the place founded by Columba who died here in 597 & is buried here. The abbey, though remote, was a dominant and powerful place for centuries. Columba established it as a place to train missionaries, to send out – so it's a good place to come and learn! There is a library, a comfortable common



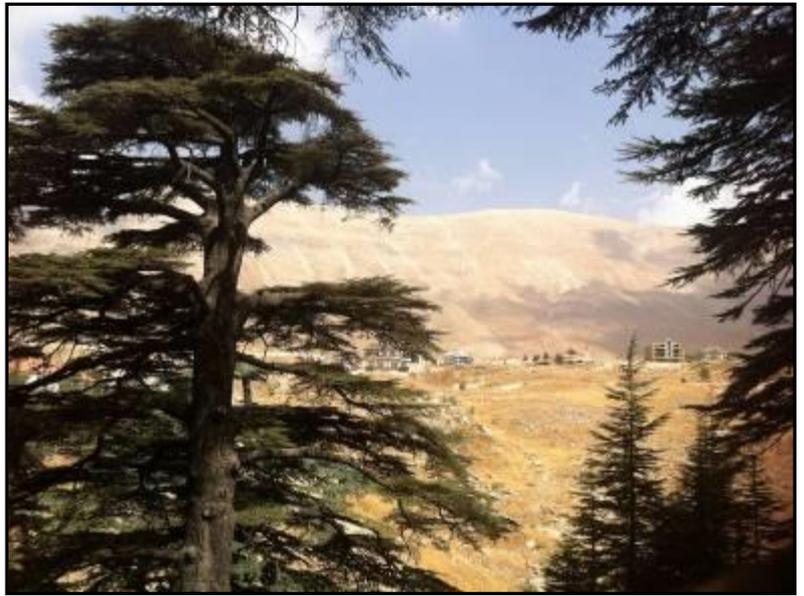
room and bunk beds to house 16 of us pilgrim 'students' in several rooms. There is no internet on this site and no meat. One has to walk down to the village! The community organise a round-the-island walk and one or two jaunts weather permitting.

Vicar's Vista July 2017

The Cedars of Lebanon

Zahra and I visited her home country during May and having visited the family took a few days to go sight-seeing.

The Lebanon is mentioned many times in the bible – 72 to be precise. It is the country to the North of the Holy Land, neighbouring Galilee and also encompasses the region of Sidon and Tyre where Jesus travelled (Mark:7).



Lebanon is famed for its Cedar Trees, which once covered the mountainous regions in great forests. They were so remarkable that King Solomon built a Palace, The House of the Forest of Lebanon, 150ft long, 75ft wide and 45ft high which was thought to have been used for banqueting. Cedar is a dense hardwood that contains natural oils making it both aromatic and long-lasting. There must have been a naturally beautiful aroma within this early palace – it was clearly an important part of the ‘splendour of Solomon’.

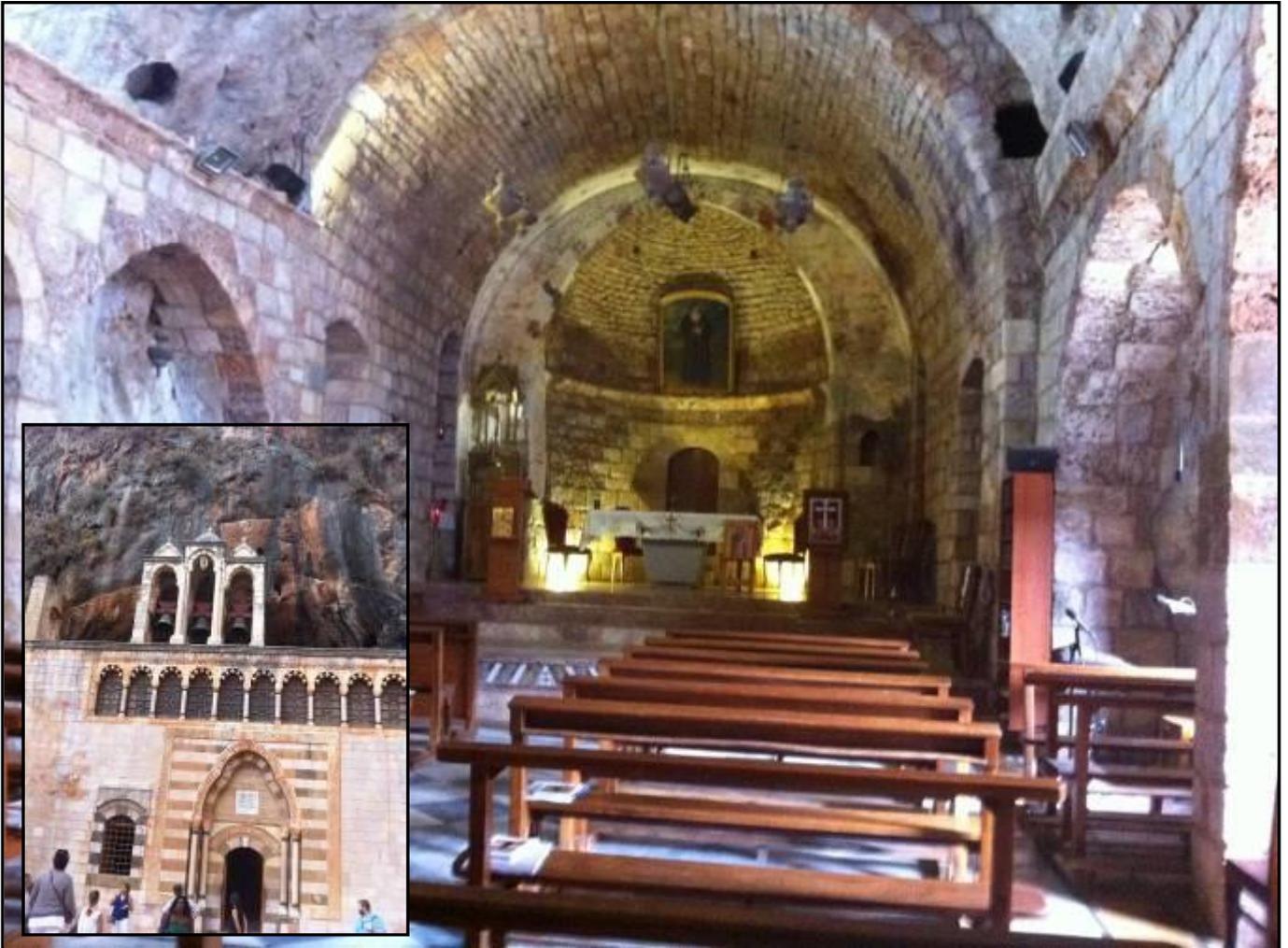
Cedar trees are very slow growing and can live a thousand years. Cedar is such a very valuable wood that it was ‘harvested’ throughout antiquity, by Phoenicians, Israelites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Romans and Turks alike, until there was virtually none left. There are a few good stands left above 2000m (6,600 feet) – that’s 2,200 feet higher than Ben Nevis. Interestingly there was such concern about the deforestation that Queen Victoria ordered a fence constructed in the 1870’s at her own expense to enclose 250 acres, and protect the tender saplings from mountain goats. Sadly, British forces cut down more trees for railway sleepers during WW1. The Lebanese Government currently has an ambitious replanting scheme.

Many cedars were brought to Britain. There is a magnificent example at Osbourne House on the Isle of Wight – in our lower, cooler climates cedars grow faster but have a shorter life-span. There are two planted in the middle of the cloisters at Salisbury Cathedral. They are named Jachin and Boaz and for the two pillars outside the original Jerusalem Temple.

Lebanon or ‘*Lubnan*’ in Arabic, is a descriptive term to mean ‘white’. The Lebanon mountains, which rise steeply up from the plains, are milky white even when not snow-covered. They were a wondrous sight to the nomads crossing the desert plains of Arabia and Syria – and Lebanon itself is used as a metaphor for both strength and fragrant beauty in the Bible:

The glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
the cypress, the plane, and the pine,
to beautify the place of my sanctuary;
and I will glorify where my feet rest. Isaiah 60:13

We travelled down to the Qadisha Valley and saw the caves of the earliest



Christian hermits – there we said prayers in a church which was part cave.

The Lebanese are a very family orientated people. Their country is smaller than Wales and has a normal population of some four million (at present it hosts a million+ refugees). There are however about 15 million Lebanese living in a worldwide diaspora and many choose to send monies to their home towns to support their kin and to build a house 'back home'. Without this Lebanon would have collapsed into poverty especially after the civil war of 1975-90. Happily, Lebanon is at peace, even though there are 12 sects of Christians, 5 sects of Muslims and the remaining Jews. This biblical land is indeed a beautiful land, flowing with water, fruits, wine, foods and olives.

The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. Psalm 104:16

And the hospitality is second to none – I cannot wait to return!

Andrew

Remembrances of Summer 2017

These years we are marking the Centenary of the Great War 1914-18 in which my paternal Grandfather was a combatant. Sgt. William Rowland was a Territorial before the outbreak of war, involved in defending the Kent coastal ports and so was immediately called upon to go to War. He served in the Royal Garrison Artillery, firing the heavy guns and survived the war – presumably because he was stationed a bit behind the Front Line. William was gassed several times and his lungs were damaged – he died in 1934. This year I will wear his medals on Remembrance Parade. This photograph from the memorial trenches at The Great Dorset Steam Fair.



In August Zahra and I joined Nicola and Alan my sister and brother-in-law, at a Gite they had rented in Normandy. My mother was also with us and although well-travelled, announced she had never been to Paris in her eighty years! A day-trip to Paris took us to the Eiffel Tower, along the River Seine to Notre Dame and of course we made a visit to the Arc de Triomphe and stood and paid our respects at the French National Memorial. The eternal flame burns to remind us of the great sacrifice, Lest we forget.



Naturally we all missed my father and were often fondly saying, "Dad would have liked this, or what ever would have dad said...."

Thank you for all your support during our time of bereavement. It feels like we have said farewell to lot of loved ones in recent times –

it is our faith in the eternal flame of God's loving presence, that sustains us and gives us hope. Memories are a rich treasure-house and no-one can take them away!





Zahra and I enjoyed visiting the Dorset Chilli Festival at Saint Giles House, Wimborne – it brought back happy memories of April 29th when our daughter Hannah married Nolan.



New memories are being made all the time and for us a great moment this summer was when our Grandchild, Christian, had his first play on the beach and paddle in the sea at Bournemouth, during the Friday at the Air Show – a wonderful sunny day and ideal 'bucket and spade weather'. We celebrate Christian's first birthday on 23rd September. He also made an appearance at Mary & Geoff Keegan's home for the delectable Mother's Union Cream Tea.



A final fond memory of summer 2017- we also visited Giverny - The memorial house and gardens of Claude Monet the great French Impressionist painter. The gardens and that famous lily pond were delightful – we hope to visit again one Spring. Andrew & Zahra X

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Vicar's Vista Nov 2017

Remembrance Tide

I was honoured to be involved in a very special Chaplaincy duty at this year's Great Dorset Steam Fair. It concerned the provision of a peal of eight bells and their delivery to St George's Memorial Church at Ypres, Belgium.



Today there are two great memorials to the fallen of the First World War, perhaps the best known of which is the Menin Gate. St George's however, is of equal importance in regards to perpetual remembrance and is an active, vibrant church serving the local community and thousands of annual visitors.

It was built with a fine bell tower as you can see from this photograph, but due to lack of funds, never equipped with bells...until now! Permission has now been granted by the Church Authorities and by the Flanders Heritage Department to fulfil this intention by installing a new peal of eight bells with a tenor (the heaviest) of 6 cwt (300kg). The new bells will complete this lasting legacy of commemoration.

These new bells have been cast in England (at John Taylor & Co, Founders, Loughborough) and will be the first change ringing peal in Belgium. They will ring out over "Some corner of a foreign field" for church services and other commemorations, although when the bells are being used to practice and for longer periods of ringing the sound outside will be greatly reduced using a comprehensive, adjustable sound control system. Great care will be taken to ensure that the tranquillity of the Church as a place of Remembrance is maintained. The cost has been met by public subscription and the bells all carry dedications for individuals and various associations and schools.



The Steam Fair donated the cost of transportation from Loughborough to Ypres by means of two preserved 1915 WW1 lorries - a Thornycroft J Type, and a Dennis A Type. These are flat bed lorries and you can see the bells of 21 to 32 inch diameter loaded on them.

Here they had been proudly processed by WW1 re-enactor soldiers, through the crowds, to the stage, for the speeches.



There are some dedicated bell-ringers in our midst. Here you will recognise our very own Canon Alan Butler (in relaxed Steam Fair attire), who together with Alison, Lydia and Pam P. were very interested in the occasion. Salisbury Bell Captains had been asked to ring a change to mark the presence of these special memorial bells in our diocese. My thanks to them for the photographs.

Here you can see me on the stage of the Electric palace of Variety in front of the Oktoberfest Organ with wartime uniformed performers who had done some period singing.



I was able to offer prayers and bless the bells on their way – a great privilege for me. It shows how chaplaincy can present many opportunities to lead the public in worship outside the church.



Here I am robed, in the hot sunshine on a military Model T Ford on which I stood (precariously) during our escort of the bells through the Fairground.

On the 30th of August the bells were taken to Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium, then to Hooge Crater Cemetery, thence to Railway Dugouts Burial Ground and onwards to be present at The Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres by

the evening. The next day the bells were toured on to the church via Ypres Reservoir Cemetery, and the Main Town Square before being dedicated on the floor of St George's by the Chaplain, Rev Gillian Trinder. I fully intend to visit Ypres one day and hear them rung in commemoration of the Great War.

It is planned that on Sunday 22nd of October the bells, having been hung, will be blessed in the tower at a special service, conducted by The Rt. Revd Robert Innes, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe.

Here in W.M. we will be on parade on November 12th. We will remember!

Paradise Papers

These are 13.4 million documents leaked to the German Newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (and thence to the international consortium for investigative journalism) from



Bermuda-based Appleby. Appleby assists major corporations and wealthy individuals to avoid and minimise tax which would otherwise be payable. Tax avoidance is legal but not morally acceptable in that it creates inequality. Governments are waking up to the global billions that are held 'offshore' in tax havens (paradise?). Funds are needed, especially in time of austerity to fund public services provided for the common good. Charity begins at home!

It has been alleged that numerous beneficiaries include The Queen, Lord Ashcroft (billionaire former Deputy Chair and major financial backer of The Conservative Party), various television stars, Lewis Hamilton and Apple Inc.. B.B.C. T.V.'s Panorama Programme and the newspapers are investigating and revealing details of tax avoidance schemes which might just comply with present legislation but in reality are at best dubious, often immoral schemes. The Government has pledged to bring transparency to the off-shore industry.

My personal view is that all individuals and corporations should be taxed on all income generated and/or derived in a place. For example, if an actor lives in Britain and gains income from a programme made here then they should pay tax on the profit of their production company, or remuneration derived from it. I pay the T.V. licence fee from my taxed income. Why then should the actor not pay U.K. tax on their income? If a racing car driver buys a jet plane he should pay V.A.T. and Income Tax on a proportion of its use that is used for pleasure. He is clearly receiving a taxable benefit in kind. Ordinary folk have to pay this tax through P.A.Y.E. - no 'Isle of Man holidays' for us!

A wealthy person who makes themselves non-resident to avoid paying tax should not be allowed to sit in The House of Lords, or Parliament. No representation without taxation! Wealthy donors and powerful insiders have long been given Peerages. This is and has always been undemocratic. Let's stop this arcane patronage! The people who advise The Queen's Estates should resign for the impropriety of involving H.M. in off-shore investments.

There has been an economic theory that has been promulgated by all governments since the 1970's and that is of 'Trickle-down'. This theory supposes that allowing the super-wealthy free movement of their capital through Britain will attract them and their riches here. That has certainly

proved true. London has become a haven for Billionaires. What is very doubtful is to what extent their riches are spent to the benefit of the average citizen. Notable economists now reject the 'Trickle-down' model. Countries like Sweden with higher tax levels are not enduring the sustained austerity that ordinary folk are suffering here. Statistics show that the average UK citizen has suffered a marked fall in living standards, whilst the rich have greatly increased their wealth, and then many have shielded it from taxation. Few rogue bankers and speculators have been prosecuted for the 2008 crash. The media reports that 50% of the world's income is owned by 1% of the people and that global inequality is increasing. This wealth in-balance will only slow growth and the poorest will suffer most. It must be challenged.

The Christian imperative is of fairness, equity and loving care for the meek and lowly. The church must speak up on this and challenge government and society to be more egalitarian. Human beings are more than economic units! The paradise that we pray to create 'On earth as in heaven' needs every Christian to take an active part in working for this 'kingdom to come'.

The 500th anniversary of The Reformation slipped by on 31st October 2017. Martin Luther protested against perceived corruptions and wrongs in the church. He revolted. Things did change! I feel that we need a Reformation in Public Life. The Church is patently now marginalised, and Capitalist Liberal Democracy is to the fore. But it is not working well either! There are too many vested interests. Wealth is unfairly distributed, vulnerable persons are encouraged to gamble and overconsume. Full access to healthcare & justice is increasingly only available to the wealthy. I feel we are regressing towards a gross inequality of earlier times. Where's the charity? We are racing towards both moral and ecological disaster. Christians Awake! Protest!

Having ranted on against all these wicked injustices, I recognise that there is nothing new in this parlous state of affairs; similar sentiments are to be found in the psalms (have a look at Psalm 73). The coming season of Advent, and on through Christmas to Epiphany, is a time when the 'wicked' world receives its saviour, Jesus, born into the most humble and poor of conditions. Charity began homeless! Thank God for this story wherein poverty is turned into riches of real and lasting value in Christ! In Him, true Paradise comes near.

Luke 16:10 Jesus said, 'Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.'

The world needs its saviour more than ever. Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus!