

Letter from the Vicar

Saturday 13 February 2021

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

And breathe! For home-schooling families, children and teenagers, teachers, and grandparents who have helped on Zoom, there was a collective sense of relaxing as 3.00pm arrived yesterday afternoon – half-term holiday has begun! Of course none of us will be jetting off on holiday to escape the snow or visit distant family this year but the change to get-off the relentless merry-go-round is most welcome. Speaking for my own family, these last 6 weeks have been exhausting – fun, but exhausting. Everyone is in need of break so next week the school books will not be coming out, Zoom will be switched-off, and I'm going to be 'off'. Long walks at Little Hay and lego making seem high on the agenda.

Last week I wrote about Fr Ben's wedding to Liz Griffiths. I know some joined the service live as it was streamed but if you didn't and would like to watch a recording, details are at the bottom of this letter. I also attach some pictures. Despite being very different to what was originally planned the Service and day were a joy to be part of. They both so clearly wanted to publically affirm their love for each other and it was lovely to be able to part of that public declaration. The weather was also incredibly kind to them – no snow but rather warm winter sunshine as you'll see from the pictures below.

The weather, once again, has been a talking point this week with temperatures struggling to get above freezing. I hope you have managed to stay warm. Despite the cold it has been lovely to see the sun and some impressive sun-rises this past week.

Next week we will enter into the season of Lent. Ordinarily I would encourage you to give-up something during these 40 days as we try to grow closer to God. This year, however, I would like you to be kind to yourselves and do no more than you are able and not to chastise yourselves if you lapse in your discipline – if you embark on one. One discipline you might light to try is to join me for Compline twice (or more) a week. I will be uploading videos of these short services to our website each week and they are the perfect way to end a day, to grow in prayerful devotion to Christ, and to pray for the needs of the world, the Church, and all who are in need of our prayers. As they are videos you can do them at your own time. Supporting resources will be made available with the videos. They will start on Monday 22 February. I am also hoping to make available a booklet of 6 weekly readings and reflections which will also appear on the website – more to follow next week.

But before Ash Wednesday comes Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day. I am sad that we will not be able to host our habitual Pancake Day Party or Cocktail Party this year but I should be delighted to hear how many pancakes folk manage to munch and what, if any, cocktails are consumed. I'm planning on having a Mojito and maybe the odd G&T too. For my Lenten discipline this year I am not giving up biscuits as I have been very good recently at cutting them out of my diet, however I am attempting to only drink alcohol 2 days each week – which will be a considerable reduction! I'll let you know how it goes.

Covid update: Many people have asked me recently when I think we will be back worshipping together in person. In short I don't fully know. But with the Standing Committee's approval I am working towards lifting the current suspension on Sunday 21 March – Passion Sunday. The infection rate, death date, and vaccination rate are all going in the right direction and the hope that in 6 weeks' time things will be even more improved. Of course we need to wait to see what the Government will announce on 22 February to see if this will be possible and what restrictions we might be operating under.

As ever I will keep you updated on developments as and when I know more, but for now I leave you with my prayers and best wishes. Keep safe; keep positive; keep warm; and remain steadfast in faith that God loves us, cares for us, and enfolds us in his arms.
In Christ,

Mike

The Reverend Michael Macey

Vicar

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Fr Ben's Wedding Service

Website: www.truecapturemedia.co.uk/622021

Password: 74F8r3eyDr

Order of Service:

<http://www.ascensionportsmouth.org.uk/.../Nuptial-Mass-1.pdf>