

## Letter from the Vicar

Saturday 24 April 2021

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In recent days I have been getting strong flash-backs to my former ministry in Westminster. Perhaps this is not surprising given the number of Royal events that have, and will be taking place. Firstly we learned of the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh – someone I met on numerous occasions and with whom I enjoyed some banter. His funeral reminded me of the plans I had worked on at the Abbey to mark the national period of mourning. Then last week was Her Majesty The Queen's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday at which special prayers would have been said at the Abbey – it being a Royal Peculiar. This Sunday is ANZAC Day – Remembrance Day for our Australian and New Zealand friends – as they remember the disastrous landing of troops at Gallipoli, Turkey, in World War I and honour all service personnel who have died serving their countries. In 'normal' times this would involve a special Service of Remembrance at the Abbey with over 2000 Aussies and Kiwis in attendance. And on Thursday 29 April we will celebrate along with TRH The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their wedding – a service I organised whilst at the Abbey. With all these events taking place, perhaps it is not surprising that memories are flooding back. To add to this I keep seeing pictures of myself in various newspapers and magazines!

For me, these are memories of good and happy times. But not all memories are. We often have memories of hurt and failure too which, if left unchecked, can debilitate and overcome us – preventing us from living life to the full. During the pandemic many of us have reminisced over memories of things we used to be able to do pre-restrictions. But we have also built-up a bank of memories of things we have done or experienced during the pandemic: the Thursday evening clap; Zoom!!! Home Schooling and remote working; Worship at Home; birthdays and anniversaries; isolation, testing and being jabbed; of loss and grief; daily walks; gardening; queuing and online shopping – the list goes on and we will each have our own memories. As with all things, it's what we do with these memories that matters. For some the temptation will be to either ignore them or to dwell in them but to my mind neither of these approaches is helpful. The pandemic is part of our story and will no doubt be a paradigm shifting experience for humanity. We need to learn from our experiences, our memories, and allow them to shape our future where there is more time for family and a gentler pace of life with less rushing about, and focus on those things which we have really missed and value and help them and our relationships to flourish once again.

This Sunday we will be holding our APCM at St John's after the Parish Eucharist. This is a chance to be involved in shaping the vision we have to be part of God's family here in this community. How can we help each other and our wider community *go deeper into God*? How can we, in God's name and strength, *transform our community and make new disciples*? How can we *Live God's love*? Now is the time to think and act with boldness – respecting and learning from our past – but focusing on our future. A future filled with promise, hope, and life in all its fullness, for:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is Risen.  
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia! Alleluia!"

As always I leave you with my prayers and best wishes. In Christ,



The Reverend Michael Macey

Vicar

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