

The Vicar Writes...

Dear Friends

There is a very striking story in the Bible about the prophet Elijah who stood up to the king of Israel and the priests of another religion and triumphed, but, as sometimes happens after a major confrontation, he suddenly lost his nerve and ran for his life. God spoke to him in his hiding place and asked "What are you doing here, Elijah?" and Elijah replied "because I alone am left and loyal to God", but God tells him that he is not alone, seven thousand households were still loyal.

Many of us experience times when we feel lonely and without the support of friends who think as we do: sometimes these feelings are brought on by confrontation with opposition, sometimes caused by tiredness, or illness, or bereavement. We are tempted to run away and hide because we feel "I alone am left".

There are two important answers to this cry of despair: the first is simply, "no, you are not alone because as a Christian you are a member of a people of God which stretches far back in history and extends throughout the world".

The second answer is the promise of Jesus himself. After his death he knew that the disciples were in danger of feeling abandoned and alone so he reassured them with the promise "remember I am with you always".

There are two important points. If, like Elijah, we run away and hide, we may take ourselves to a place where we forget those who are members of our Christian family and indeed forget that Jesus has promised to be with us always.

On the other hand, all of us need to be aware, especially at this time, that in our society there are many who feel lonely and so need to be reassured that they are not alone and to experience the support and friendship which they so badly need.

With all good wishes
Andrew

WHEN CHRIST STOOD IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE

I'm not a big fan of statues – but my favourite was the life-sized figure of Christ that stood in London's Trafalgar Square during the Millennium celebrations.

It stood on the square's previously-empty fourth plinth, going almost unnoticed among the surrounding grand statues and with Nelson's Column towering above it.



The statue, called Ecce Homo (Behold the Man), was built by conceptual artist Mark Wallinger and erected in 1999. He explained: "I consciously made Him life-size. We are made in God's image, and He was made in our image. "So for the statue to stand in contrast to the overgrown relics of empire was definitely part of the plan."

The figure was made of white marble resin, and depicted Christ standing before the multitude with His head slightly bowed.

I found the statue of Christ deeply moving and kept returning to Trafalgar Square to stand and gaze at it. Because to me, the statue declared Christ's vulnerability. It stood as a reminder that the God of all creation came to earth as a man and lived among us. He gave up His life so that we might have salvation.

There, with London's traffic rushing by, pigeons coming in to land, and tourists snapping photographs of each other, Christ stood unobtrusively. Standing, you could say, at the door of our consciousness, and asking to be let in. In a BBC interview at the time, the artist said that he wanted the statue to be an antidote to the "spiritually empty celebration" then taking place at the Millennium Dome in Greenwich.

It certainly had a deep effect on me. In April 2017, the statue of Christ was placed on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral during Easter. Again, I watched as tourists passed by not noticing the figure. It was a modern-day parable in marble resin.

When the Apostle Paul took a stroll around Athens, he spotted the various altars and statues to the Greek gods. He found an altar 'To an Unknown God' and declared that this was "the God who made the world and everything in it" who had made Himself known in Jesus Christ.

Just as Mark Wallinger took possession of the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square for Jesus Christ – the reason for the Millennium celebrations – so Paul claimed the 'unknown God' altar in Athens for the Christian gospel.

The Bible has always been wary of putting people on pedestals. It shows us all sides of the people it describes, warts and all. It tells us that Moses was a murderer, that David was an adulterer, that Paul persecuted the first Christians and that Peter denied Christ.

But all of us have feet of clay, and few of us deserve to be memorialised for centuries in stone or marble. Rather, we are gently encouraged to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Maybe that's the best way to make our mark in history.
Peter Crumpler, a Church of England priest in St. Albans, Herts and a former Director of Communications with the CofE

THE STORY BEHIND: 'Just as I am'

The hymn 'Just As I Am' must be one of the most famous in the world. It has been sung by tens of millions of Christians at Billy Graham Crusades the world over, just for starters! Yet it was not written by a professional who was 'aiming' at a specific market, as many songs seem to be written today. Instead, it was written by an artist in Victorian times.

Her name was Charlotte Elliott, and she was born in Clapham in 1789. She grew up in a well to do home, and became a portrait artist and also a writer of humorous verse. All was well until Charlotte fell ill in her early 30s, and slid into a black depression. A minister, Dr Caesar Malan of Switzerland, came to visit her. Instead of sympathising, he asked her an unexpected question: did she have peace with God? Charlotte deeply resented the question and told him to mind his own business.

But after he left, his question haunted her. *Did* she have peace with God? She knew that she did not, that she had done some very wrong things. So, she invited Dr Malan to return. She told him that she would like to become a Christian, but would have to sort out her life first.

Dr Malan again said the unexpected: "Come just as you are." The words were a revelation to Charlotte. She had assumed that she would have to put her life in order before she could hope to be accepted by God. Instead, she realised that Jesus wanted her just as she was – and He would take care of the sin. Charlotte became a Christian that day. 14 years later, in 1836, Charlotte wrote some verses that summed up how it had been between her and Jesus that day. They ran:

*Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bids't me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

*Just as I am, tho tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt
Fightings within, and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

Charlotte could not have dreamed that 150 years into the future, her verses would be sung by millions of people all over the world, as they responded to the Gospel presented at many great Billy Graham crusades, and made their way forward to do just as the hymn describes – to come to Jesus Christ, despite sin and fear and doubts, to come 'just as I am.'

What have I missed during lockdown?

It's a good question, because it is about the things that make us tick. When I examined my list, I found obvious things – going to church, live sport on TV, meeting up with friends for a coffee or a beer.

But as I thought more deeply about it, I realised that what I missed most was TOUCH. For nearly four months I have not touched another human being!

That is an astonishing deprivation. When a baby is born, its first experiences are all of touch. The strong hands of the midwife, mother's excited and loving embrace, tiny hands reaching out to feel mummy's face. We touch our way into life.

And then it goes on. Holding hands with friends, being hugged by grandma, your first serious kiss, and perhaps a last tearful one at the end of a much-loved life.

We greet each other with a holy kiss, the Bible says. And why not?

Sight, smell, hearing and touch. Four senses. And I think lockdown has taught me that the greatest of these is touch!

The Rev'd Canon David Winter

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO CHRISTOPHER ROBIN?

One hundred years ago this month, on 21st August 1920, Christopher Robin Milne was born. He was the only son of the author A. A. Milne and appeared as a character in his father's Winnie-the-Pooh stories and verses – a role he enjoyed at first but later found difficult to handle.

The characters in Winnie the Pooh were based on his own soft toys or items purchased later. The setting was inspired by Ashdown Forest in East Sussex: his family owned nearby Cotchford Farm and spent weekends and holidays there.

His relationship with his nanny, Olive 'Nou' Brockwell, was close and continued into adult life, but when he went to boarding school near Guildford in 1930 he was bullied because his father's work was well known: one poem, *Vespers*, brought him "toe-curling, fist-clenching, lip-biting embarrassment".



He married a cousin, Lesley de Sélincourt, in 1948 and opened a bookshop in Dartmouth. He was close to his father but not to his mother, Daphne, who did not see him during the last 15 years of her life.

Milne had one child, Clare, who had cerebral palsy. He himself had myasthenia gravis in his later years and died in 1996; he was described by one newspaper as a 'dedicated atheist'.

Tim Lenton

Watch out for this predator

If you like bees, then keep an eye out this summer for a dangerous invader from the Continent – the Asian hornet. A single Asian hornet can consume 50 honeybees in one day.

In recent years the Asian hornet has spread across Europe, devouring honeybees by the tens of thousands. They are most likely to be found in southern England after crossing the Channel from France, or in imported soil, plants and fruit.

An Asian hornet is mostly black, with thin yellow stripes, an orange face and yellow legs. Measuring 1.2 inches, it is slightly smaller than the European hornet, and is of about the same threat to humans. But they are deadly when it comes to honeybees. Asian hornets wait outside of honeybee hives and pounce on emerging workers, chopping them up alive and taking back the thorax to their own young.

If you think you have spotted an Asian hornet, report it through the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app:

[Asian Hornet Watch app for iPhone](#)

[Asian Hornet Watch app for android](#)



If you find a nest, don't try to remove it yourself – it can be dangerous and should only be done by experts.

More details at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-uk-sightings>

THE STATELY ROSEBAY WILLOWHERB

If wildflowers were to compete in terms of height, rosebay willowherb would have to be one of the contenders for first prize. By mid- to late-summer its height can reach four feet or so [120cm] with pyramids of pinkish-purple flowers cheering up the most unlikely places, for it is happy to grow on railway cuttings and embankments and amongst ruined buildings and disturbed ground.

Indeed, during the Second World War, Rosebay Willowherb was often one of the very first plants to cheer up London's bomb-sites, and even ground that had been cleared by fire, resulting in it having another, but far less attractive name – Fireweed.

Spring flowers tend to have white or yellow petals – snowdrops, primroses, daffodils, wood anemones and celandines. This trend is abruptly changed when bluebells make an appearance. By midsummer however, warmer colours have made an appearance, and Rosebay Willowherb is no exception. The flowers, with deep pink petals intercepted by purple sepals account for the first word of the name, while the leaves, which grow in spirals around them, are responsible for 'Willowherb' being added, as they



become narrow at each end, and therefore resemble [loosely!] those of a willow tree.

In the times of Queen Victoria this wonderful plant was a treasured addition to many gardens and it was not nearly as abundant in the countryside. However, Mother Nature soon dealt with that! Once the flower is pollinated, seed capsules form. When ripe, they split to release many, many

billows of seed, all ready to be blown far and wide by autumn winds.

So, we now have a plant loved by many, often from a car or train. But while the size and vibrant colour mean it cannot hide, the fluffy seeds tell us that autumn will not be far away.

Kirsty Steele, a retired teacher and active church organist.

DID YOU KNOW?

On one of the facades of Gaudi's Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, clearly visible is an apparently random table of numbers incised into the stone.

1	14	14	4
11	7	6	9
8	10	10	5
13	2	3	15

Actually the numbers are not random at all. Add up each of the four horizontal lines; each of the four vertical lines; and each of the two four figure diagonals. Every one of these additions equals 33 - the number of years that Jesus Christ lived on earth.

The magnificent Sagrada Familia is steeped in symbolism, and this is just one example.

Anna Castley



CALENDAR FOR **AUGUST**

PATRONAL FESTIVAL

Sun	2	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Parish Communion No Evening Prayer
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TRINITY 9

Sun	9	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Matins No Evening Prayer
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TRINITY 10

Sun	16	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Parish Communion No Evening Prayer
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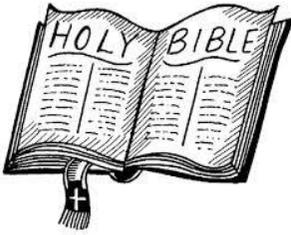
TRINITY 11

Sun	23	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Matins No Evening Prayer
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Thurs	27	3.30 pm	Magazine collation
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TRINITY 12

Sun	30	8.00 am 10.30 am	Holy Communion Parish Communion No Evening Prayer
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SUNDAY READINGS **IN AUGUST**

Sunday 2nd August – TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD

OLD TESTAMENT: Daniel 7.9-10, 13-14

Daniel's vision depicts the joint supremacy of the 'ancient one' with the one to whom he confers eternal sovereignty over all nations.

NEW TESTAMENT: 2 Peter 1.16-19

Peter underscores the function of transfiguration to confirm Jesus' identity as God's son and the fulfilment of the prophetic ministry.

GOSPEL: Luke 9.28-36

Luke's account of the Transfiguration of Christ serves to reinforce the authority of God's word in his teaching.

Sunday 9th August - Trinity 9

OLD TESTAMENT: 1 Kings 19.9-18

Elijah flees to Horeb and the Lord appears to him, not in the wind, earthquake or fire, but in the still small voice.

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 14.22-33

Jesus walks on the water and invites Peter to do the same, but his faith falters and he begins to sink.

Sunday 16th August - Trinity 10

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 56.1,6-8

Isaiah describes that salvation is available to all whether they are of the House of Israel or not.

NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 11.1-2,29-32

Paul follows on from the Isaiah reading, pointing out the disobedience of God's chosen people.

GOSPEL: Matthew 15.10-28

The faith of the Canaanite woman who told Jesus even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.

Sunday 23rd August - Trinity 11

OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 51.1-16

The everlasting salvation for Zion.

NEW TESTAMENT: Matthew 16.13-20

Peter's confession of the Christ at Caesarea Philippi.

Sunday 30th August - Trinity 12

OLD TESTAMENT: Jeremiah 15.15-21

Jeremiah bemoans his suffering before the Lord but if the people repent God will rescue them.

NEW TESTAMENT: Romans 12.9-end

Paul speaks of how we must love each other even our enemy. "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good".

GOSPEL: Matthew 16.21-end

Jesus predicts his death and Peter is admonished by Jesus with the words "get behind me Satan!".

TO MAKE YOU SMILE....

Keep your distance!

I never thought the comment, "I wouldn't touch you with a six-foot pole" would become national policy, but here we are!

Body parts

A doctor in our village surgery often plays a game with his younger patients to put them at ease, and to test their knowledge of body parts. And so it was that one day, while pointing to my young son's ear, the doctor asked him solemnly, "And so this is your nose?" Alarmed, my son

glanced over to me and said softly: "Mum, I think we'd better find a new doctor!"

The Transfiguration - a glimpse of glory ***6th August***

The story is told in Matthew (17:1-9), Mark (9:1-9) and Luke (9:28-36).

It was a time when Jesus' ministry was popular, when people were seeking Him out. But on this day, He made time to take Peter, James and John, His closest disciples, up a high mountain.

In the fourth century, Cyrillic of Jerusalem identified it as Mount Tabor (and there is a great church up there today), but others believe it more likely to have been one of the three spurs of Mount Hermon, which rises to about 9,000 feet, and overlooks Caesarea Philippi.

High up on the mountain, Jesus was suddenly transfigured before His friends. His face began to shine as the sun, His garments became white and dazzling. Elijah and Moses, of all people, suddenly appeared, and talked with Him. A bright cloud overshadowed the disciples.

Peter was staggered, but, enthusiast that he was – immediately suggested building three tabernacles on that holy place, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. But God's 'tabernacling', God's dwelling with mankind, does not any longer depend upon building a shrine. It depends on the presence of Jesus, instead. And so a cloud covered them, and a Voice spoke out of the cloud, saying that Jesus was His beloved Son, whom the disciple should 'hear'.

God's dwelling with mankind depends upon our listening to Jesus.

Then, just as suddenly, it is all over. What did it mean? Why Moses and Elijah? Well, these two men represent the Law and the Prophets of the Old Covenant, or Old Testament. But now they are handing on the baton, if you like: for both the Law and the Prophets found their true and final fulfilment in Jesus, the Messiah.



Why on top of a mountain? In Exodus we read that Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the sacred covenant from Yahweh in the form of the Ten Commandments. Now Jesus goes up and is told about the 'sealing' of the New Covenant, or New Testament of God with man, which will be accomplished by His coming death in Jerusalem.

That day made a lifelong impact on the disciples. Peter mentions it in his second letter, 2 Peter 1:16 – 19 – invariably the reading for this day.

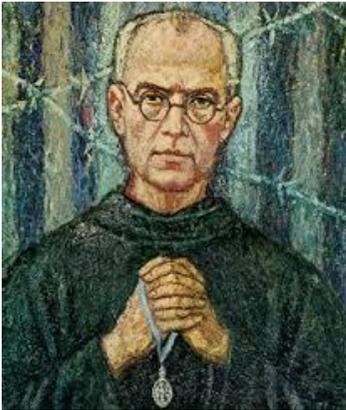
The Eastern Churches have long held the Transfiguration as a feast as important as Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension and Pentecost. But it took a long time for the West to observe the Transfiguration. The feast starts appearing from the 11th and 12th centuries, and the Prayer Book included it among the calendar dates, but there was no liturgical provision for it until the 19th century.



MAXIMILIAN KOLBE - Christian Witness in WW2 (14th August)

Some people's lives seem to epitomise the suffering of millions, but also to shine with a Christian response to it.

One such person was Maximilian Kolbe, 1894 – 1941, a Franciscan priest of Poland, and publisher extraordinary. Maximilian was born at Zdunska Wola, near Lodz, where his parents, devout Christians, worked in a cottage weaving industry. Like thousands of others at the time, the family and their village were ground into poverty by Russian exploitation. In 1910 Maximilian entered the Franciscan Order, and studied at Rome. After his ordination in 1919, Maximilian returned to Poland, where he was sent to teach church history in a seminary. But a new factor had entered



his life: he was diagnosed with tuberculosis.

Living in post-war Poland was difficult enough, but with tuberculosis as well? Most people would have quietly withered away. Not Maximilian Kolbe. Instead, the tuberculosis gave Maximilian a sense of urgency – a sense of the transitory nature of life. He knew his time was slipping away.

Instead of teaching history, he determined to do something to help the Christians living in Poland now, in the tatters of Europe after the First World War. And so he founded a magazine for Christian readers in Cracow, who badly needed effective apologetics to help them hold to their faith in a chaotic world.

Soon, the obsolete printing presses (which were operated by Maximilian's fellow priests and lay brothers) were working overtime – the magazine's circulation had leapt to 45,000. Then the printing presses were moved to a town near Warsaw, Niepokalanow, where Maximilian now founded a Franciscan community which combined prayer with cheerfulness and poverty with modern technology: daily as well as weekly newspapers were soon produced. The community grew and grew, until by the late 1930s it numbered 762 friars.

Then in 1939 the Germans invaded Poland. Maximilian sent most of his friars home, to protect them from what was to come. He turned the monastery into a refugee camp for 3,000 Poles and 1,500 Jews. And the presses continued: taking a patriotic, independent line, critical of the Third Reich.

Kolbe was arrested by the Gestapo along with four friars. They were taken to Auschwitz in May 1941. Their names were exchanged for tattooed numbers; and they were sent to brutal forced labour.

But Maximilian Kolbe continued his priestly ministry. He heard confessions in unlikely places, and smuggled in bread and wine for the Eucharist. His sympathy and compassion for those even more unfortunate than himself was outstanding.

Then came the final scene in his hard life. At the end of July, 1941, several men escaped from his bunker at the camp. The Gestapo, in revenge, came to select several more men from the same bunker who were to be starved to death. A man, Francis Gajowniczek, was chosen. As he cried in despair, Kolbe stepped forward.

"I am a Catholic priest. I wish to die for that man. I am old; he has a wife and children." The officer in charge shrugged his shoulders – and obliged.

So Maximilian went to the death chamber of Cell 18, and set about preparing the others to die with dignity by prayers, psalms, and the example of Christ's Passion. Two weeks later only four were left alive: Maximilian alone was fully conscious. He was injected with phenol and died on 14 August, aged 47.

He was beatified by Paul VI in 1971. In 1982 he was canonised by Pope John Paul II, formerly Archbishop of Cracow, the diocese which contains Auschwitz. Present at the ceremony that day was Francis Gajowniczek, the man whose life Maximilian Kolbe had saved.

The Rectory
St James the Least

My dear Nephew Darren

When the churches reopen for public worship (whenever that is!) I hope you will come and take Evensong one Sunday. But, thinking of your visit last August, I would prefer you used the pulpit when preaching. How could Colonel Brockle complete 'The Times' crossword and Miss Balmer her knitting with you constantly walking up and down in front of them? They found it most disconcerting, as out of politeness, they were obliged to listen to you. It was a unique experience they do not wish to repeat.



Those few who defy Anglican tradition and sit at the front of the church were also placed in the dilemma of trying to decide whether they should keep turning in their pews as you paraded down the nave and then rotating back to the

front as you re-emerged up the side aisle. It did Lady Plumtree's vertigo no good at all. It also allowed people to see that you were wearing suede shoes. For many of our worshippers, the most appalling of heresies are as nothing when compared to brown shoes under a cassock.

I appreciate you made heroic efforts and got your sermon down to 30 minutes, but that is still 20 minutes longer than they anticipated and 29 minutes longer than their attention span.

No, use the pulpit in future; that is the reason why stonemasons 600 years ago put twenty tons of marble in our church in the first place and it would be a shame to disappoint them. It also means that from a distance of 100 yards and a height of 20 feet, no one can tell that the glass of water I use liberally while preaching is in fact a gin and tonic.

I concede that our pulpit has its dangers. I have known several bishops come to grief as their robes wrap themselves around the newel post as they ascend the steps. One, unable to untangle himself, was obliged to preach while half-way up the steps and with his back to the congregation, while our vergier was dispatched to find a pair of scissors.

Perhaps, before your next visit, we may install a mechanical floor in the pulpit, so that after 10 minutes, it slowly lowers you into the crypt while the congregation can get on with singing the last hymn before getting home in decent time.

Your loving uncle,
Eustace

FROM THE REGISTERS

Funeral

2nd July Joy Winifred Bevans (98)
16th July Peter Inge

Baptism

12th July Mia Louisa Atkin

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sunday 2 nd	Susanne King
Sunday 9 th	Grace Martin
Sunday 16 th	Wendy Bales
Sunday 23 rd	Wendy Bales
Sunday 30 th	Jette Fletcher



MAGAZINE DEADLINE

The deadline for the September issue of the
Church Magazine is
Friday 21st August