

The Parish of St Peter & St Mary New Fishbourne and the Parish of St Mary the Virgin Apuldram

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Dear Parishioners

January 2010 and here we are at the beginning of a new decade in your personal story of family and world history; a new era of change, trends, fashion and design. People of all ages read this magazine and I wonder which decade you were born into and which significant memories spring to mind of those first ten years in your personal history. Memory can be such a blessing, it can also be a curse as there may be past events we would dearly like to bury and forget but they're deeply and painfully engraved and will not be forgotten. There may be memories which we plead others would forget but it seems they too must remind us of the past. When Jesus taught the disciples to pray saying, 'forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us' he was only too aware of how we hold on to and harbour our own trespasses and the trespasses of others denying ourselves and others peace.

Memories can be so comforting too, as we recount and treasure happier times. If we were unable to remember, we would never learn the simplest of lessons or be able to acquire the skills which help us cope with life and living. We use our ability to remember in many subtle ways, enabling us to filter out or completely forget events, people, places indeed some people seem to be able to erase whole periods of time. When we say that we have forgotten something or someone, giving all sorts of rational reasoning for the oversight, we actually use a certain amount of personal choice in our use of memory.

As Lesley and I now get ready to leave you all in Fishbourne and Apuldram I am aware of many memories. I would like to say they are all good and happy, but weaved into the whole tapestry of brightly coloured memories are some dark threads. Alongside the golden threads are sewn the darker colours. For instance, as I walk through the Churchyards I remember the faces of people young and old and feel the loss of those who once worshipped in the churches or lived amongst us and were a part of our 'Christian faith community'. I also remember with sadness the people who left because they found it difficult to be part of the Church here whilst I have been Rector. I hope they can return. I am truly sorry for being an obstacle to some. Part of my role as Rector has been to enforce certain rules but never to prevent people from being a part of God's Kingdom.

The golden threads predominate in my mind and they represent the people who make up the tapestry. Living here, working here, being a part of so many of your lives and families in the good times and in the bad has been far more than a job. Some of the contacts we've had have been fleeting but none the less meaningful and timely for me and I hope for you too. We have been Christians together in community providing a spiritual and theological family base from which Christ is being proclaimed by word and example in the wider community, now.....and in the future I know you will continue to be all that you have been called to be.

As many of you will know, Lesley and I are soon going to live near Chelmsford in Essex. I will be Priest-in-Charge of the parishes of St. Andrew's, Sandon and St. Mary's, Little Baddow within the Chelmer-Crouch Group Ministry of eight churches. Now I don't wish to sound pious but I do believe that God's fingerprints are all over this change in our lives. When I say 'our lives' I mean to include you in that statement. In the evening office of the Northumbria Community these following words are recited as a statement of faith, *'Lord, You have always marked the road for the coming day; and though it may be hidden, today I believe'*.

As you enter a new decade and a period of change and apparent uncertainty remember he will be leading you day by day on the journey ahead of you. *'If you make the Most High your dwelling.....then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways; they will lift you up in their hands. Ps.91*

God be with you

Clive

Our aim is to be a Christian faith community, which will provide a spiritual and theological family base from which Christ will be proclaimed by word and example in the wider community, now and in the future