

16th May 2020

Hello all, this will be my last e-pistle until after my holiday. Next contact will be on Monday May 25th. A blessed relief to some I imagine and a bit of a breather for me too. When I sent the first 'View from the Vicarage' we had just gone into lockdown and I, like so many, had no idea how long it was going to last. As it turns out, quite a long time! I wasn't expecting to be writing quite so many messages and I'm glad that early on I decided not to write one on Fridays (my rest day) or Sundays (when those watching the Sung Mass would get a short Homily).

As you've probably noticed, it can be hard to come up with something fresh each day, so apologies for the times I'm a bit repetitive. The value of keeping in touch this way initially, was that the regular recipients of the electronic version of the Sunday Newsletter, would be kept in touch with developments in the parish. However, it quickly became obvious that many others, not normally on the list, wanted to sign up as a way of being in contact with the church and each other. Since then people from outside the parish have joined the list after being invited by current members. This has led to a growth in contacts from 24 (the pre C-19 Newsletter family) to 61 and includes friends from some of my previous parishes and some other, more local, churches. We have even had some of our e-pistles put on the Grimsby Minster website!

Looking ahead, there is still no way of telling when our daily lives and worship will recover some kind of regular pattern where we can meet up in 'real' life. It's my intention, therefore, to continue with these communications so that people can follow what's going on in the parish and wider church and to share the various documents that we need for worship at home. I'm very grateful to all who have made contributions to the e-pistles, please keep them coming. If at any stage, however, you've had enough, then just let me know and I'll remove you from the list!

We continue to keep in touch with those not on-line with regular telephone calls, spearheaded by Rose and others, with an occasional call from me and I am hugely proud of how well we have been able to look out for each other and the wider community by various means.

During the week Morning and Evening Prayer will continue (might as well, as I don't stop saying them when I'm away and it's no inconvenience just to put them on Facebook). There will be a Sung Mass for Ascension Day, Thursday 21st May at 12 Noon.

I continue to pray that you will all stay safe and well. Be in touch when I'm back in action. Tom

And finally...Anonymous friend strikes again!

An old Italian lived alone in Brixton, he wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work as the ground was hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent, I am feeling pretty sad, because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over...I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me, like in the old days. Love, Papa

A few days later he received a letter from his son:

Dear Pop, Don't dig up that garden! That's where the money is buried. Love, Vinnie

At 4am the next morning the local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left. That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

*Dear Pop, go ahead and plant the tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances.
Love you, Vinnie*

Sent by Canon Tom Page
Vicar: Ascension with All Saints
Chelmsford
(AwAS)