

4th May 2020

Greetings dear friends. Apologies to those who receive these e-pistles and live elsewhere but this is a bit specific to the parish where I currently serve.

I was just wondering if the number of people who would like to have a visit from me will suddenly spike after the lockdown comes to an end?

Let me explain for those who are not in the know. You see, for some time now I have been encouraging church family members to invite me to visit them at home. I know, it smacks of a slightly old-fashioned kind of 'vicaring', when there used to be so much more time for the parish priest to get on his horse and ride around the parish visiting the flock! However, as I approach the last few years of active parish ministry, I have divested myself of many of the 'hidden extras' that clergy can accumulate over the years, Deanery and Diocesan roles, community commitments, that are not necessarily in need of priestly involvement.

This active laying down of non-parish work has enabled me to take back time which I now spend on parish work, in order to make sure that when I retire, the parish is in a strong position to carry on the work that we currently do together.

One of the things I've been trying to do is visit every parishioner in their own home, where possible. But it's been harder to pin people down than you might think. One person asked me if I was going to come and talk about money, expecting me to be asking them to give more to the church! That was the last thing on my mind, all I wanted was a decent cup of tea, maybe a biscuit and a chance to get to know them better. I suspect that there were more than a few others that thought I had an ulterior motive for wanting to visit but not so!

Now that we've been starved of contact for a while though, I'm thinking people may be more ready for a visit, even from the vicar. Diary will be open when the situation allows!

And finally...I ordered a Chicken Tarka from the Indian Take-Away. It's like a Chicken Tikka but a little otter!

Tom

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