

3rd June 2020

Good morning all. It's pretty much impossible to avoid the news of what's going on in America at present. The terrible events following the needless death of George Floyd after he was arrested by the police. There can simply be no excuse for the behaviour of the police officers who were involved. We all know what difficult jobs all police officers have and this is compounded in America by the danger of easily obtainable guns. It must be near intolerable to live on the edge day by day not knowing from moment to moment if you are going to be shot at. However, this was not the case here. Mr. Floyd had been detained, cuffed and placed on the ground. It's hard to see what further threat he could have been to four armed police officers and yet they felt it necessary to kneel on him to restrain him further and ignore his pleas that he was unable to breathe.

We cannot possibly know what was going through the minds of those police officers, nor comprehend the sum of the experiences they may have had during their years in the police service. Nevertheless, there are boundaries which, as human beings, let alone people of faith, we simply should not cross.

One of the things that this has raised for me is my own racism. I know, we don't like to think of ourselves as racist but from time to time I do find myself casually falling back on stereotypes. It's lazy and wrong and you'd think I'd know better, considering my Great Grandfather came from the West Indies. So the American situation is a stark reminder that issues like racism, are never really far below the surface of 'civilised' society and that we must constantly be aware of them and combat them when we meet them.

No 'And finally' today, as I think the above is too serious to end with anything frivolous.

Tom

Sent by Canon Tom Page

Vicar: Ascension with All Saints

Chelmsford

(AwAS)