

15th July 2020

Dear all,

you see, the subject line has changed! Although, we are still in France, I thought I should mark the change in "status" - whatever a lay parish worker actually is... I thought that's what we all are.

Anyway.... this may be a good opportunity to start sharing some ideas/requests that come through my initial training institution (Eastern Region Ministry Course) and my continuing training with the diocese.

And, as luck has it, another article in that German Christian newspaper that I might have mentioned before, gave me much to think about.

In our training we are encouraged to think about ministry and mission. How are we to tell of and spread the Good News that has been given to us? And that not only to all those who are already faithful followers of The Way but also, and maybe even in particular, to those who are on the "outskirts" of or not at all connected with the Church.

And here is where that article comes in. It was entitled "The silence of the churches in Corona-times".

I was appalled!! How dare they say we were/are silent??? Look at all that fantastic stuff we have created and all those technologies we have embraced! Look at the numbers of people viewing and participating in our online services! Silent? Us?

After my first indignation was over, I read the article (always good to do that before one gets over-excited....). And there I found some uncomfortable but rather good food for thought. And thinking I did (and haven't finished):

How did we actually approach and look after those who are on the margins of our communities? Did we actually engage with the wider community, the city, other churches? I know, you did, through the homeless people project for example - but, confession time, Holy Trinity, didn't do much. And, hand on heart, we are not terribly good in looking beyond our Victorian building and expat community in general, despite some great efforts by a few in the congregation.

And there was another thought in that article: do we actually know what people who are on the margins or who are not involved with any faith group at all, are looking for? What do they wish for?

If you do, for example from speaking to your neighbours, friends, relatives, please let me know.

I am sure that would help me get to know better the wider community in Chelmsford. And, who knows, maybe it will help me write one or two assignments as well 😊.

Whatever your findings, I will be happy to have them. And we might even be able to discuss this at some point and find something that we can all do together to reach out to those who might not even know that they are searching for something.

With all best wishes and blessings from your very idealistic curate to be,

Julia