

Chaplain's Blog Stardate November 2016

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The Wild Goose:

The Wild Goose is, for me, a favourite metaphor because in the Celtic tradition a Wild Goose symbolises the Holy Spirit rather than a dove. It is an image I relate to well: the thought of a huge wild bird landing on my shoulder driving me in directions I had never really thought of or expected.

At the Readers in Training residential weekend Hilary Spong showed a little PowerPoint presentation depicting the behaviour of Geese as an illustration of how we might be towards each other which inspired me to use the Wild Goose as part of the evening worship. (Not, I hasten to add anything to do with landing on other people's shoulders!) On the Readers in Training page of the Website you can see Hilary's PowerPoint and there is also a link to YouTube to a group called Iona singing 'The Wild Goose.' I am sure that Celtic pipes and folksy sounds are not everyone's cup of tea but for me it works! I love the line 'so I say a prayer that the wild goose will come to me' and in the sinking aftermath of a residential weekend when one heads back to the real world it became a bit of a mantra in my dog walking prayers.

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Imagine my surprise and joy at a package dropping through the letter box from one of the people I had recently trained as a worship leader. Inside, a thank you card and a stained glass wild goose. It did not land on my shoulder- but it did land on my door mat and for that I am thankful.

The Quiet Day and the Search for Quiet!

There is still time to book your place at Epiphany house for the Quiet Day with Bishop Tim on December 8th. There is a meeting for some of us before the day to work on the Reader's Day so the Quiet Day itself will begin with tea and coffee at 10:00 Please bring a packed lunch (tea & coffee will be provided at lunchtime) and a donation towards costs.

I am looking forward to a day of quiet in particular this year. While it has been a blessing and a joy to have three year old grandson and six year old granddaughter and their parents staying with us while building work is done on their house it does reprise the whole notion of parents of young families trying to find time for anything, let alone a time of peace and quiet for prayer. Get up with the lark and soon the lark is up with you chirping joyously in your ear! As we exhort others from our various pulpits, lecterns and legiliums to find time for prayer and to spend time listening to God spare a thought for those for whom that seems impossible.

Reading for Advent:

I bought "The First Christmas" by Marcus J Borg and John Dominic Crossman a while ago and put it aside like a treat to devour through the Advent season along with my diet of Spiritual Direction related tomes for the course. Borg had me hooked on his writing and theology by a third of the way through 'Convictions' so knowing that he won't be writing more due to his death in January 2015, I thought I would save this one.

Getting to Know Each Other: The Chaplain in Conversation with.....

This little epistle to the Readers each month seems a good place to introduce some Readers you may not necessarily meet even if you attend the annual service and the Readers' day. It would be lovely for me to come and talk to some of you about your vocation and work as a Reader and then to write it up as an article or if you are happy with it, to put the interview on the website as an MP3 file for others to listen to.

Readers in Training

Yesterday was the 'preaching practical' day for the Readers in Training which we held in St Michael's Newquay. I had the privilege of doing the opening worship and putting my five minute sermon onto that in context. They had a choice of four readings and every one of them did a fantastic job especially as for some it was their first time.

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Prayer Thoughts:

Since I took on the role of chaplain my prayer life has changed. Perhaps responsibility is a motivator to be more structured and to a point, more disciplined. It is certainly with more joy.

I have linked prayers with learning names recently and found that very helpful in a number of ways. The good folk on the spiritual direction course and the current and recent Readers in Training are prayed for daily as I picture their faces in the last place we met. Other Readers and significant others also come to mind as 'snapshots.'

Now I know that the visual is not helpful to everyone but it is helping me currently. With that in mind.... it would be super if Readers would send me a little portrait picture so I can put faces to names, especially when I am praying (or meeting you at a safeguarding course!)

My wife, Lez, goes in for a hip replacement on December 29th, so between the two of us we will have one good set! All surgery and illnesses have the effect of focusing our attention whether it is our own health or that of someone close to us and through those times it is wonderful to be part of a praying community. Please keep us in your prayers in the coming weeks as you will be in mine.