

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Riding the roller coaster of life



Dear Friends,

It has been a roller coaster of a month for us at All Saints': especially with the sadness of Elliot's resignation as Team Curate and leaving for a new life in New Zealand. Then there is the gloomy forecast for our Church that we will be £6,000 in deficit by the end of the year - and yet the uplifting experience of a beautiful Harvest Festival and the fantastic Osiligi Maasai warriors with their singing, dancing and jumping! The warriors inspired us with their message of hope, peace and respect. Their contentment with so little in the way of material goods and their deep sense of connectedness to one another and the world contrasted with the fear in our own society that we reflected upon in our Service of Care and Concern in the Community.

We also find such contrasts of highs and lows in our personal lives. How should we deal with the low times? We often find ourselves responding in fear and worry. Fear drives our consumer led society. Fear that we can never have enough: even love, we feel, needs strings attached otherwise we fear that we will be hurt; fear that we will never have enough money as the media shows us that there is always something else that we need; fear that we never seem to have enough time to do what we ought to do let alone what we want to do; and fear that what we do is never going to be good enough to satisfy our expectations.

The Maasai warriors began their performance with prayer, showing that their lives were grounded in God's presence, and although they said that they enjoyed their stay in Britain they also explained that they certainly did not miss the materialism that we so cherish when they were back in their village living

contented and more slowly-paced lives! As we are told in Psalm 45:10, "Be still, and know that I am God".

Being rooted and grounded in God's love and recognising our connectedness with one another and the world enables us to put our fear into perspective. We don't need to buy more, do more or be more. In fact we may well need to slow down, taking time to enjoy the journey of life, as opposed to the desperate need to arrive, fill our lives with material resources, meet the goal, accomplish the task, do as much as possible in as little time as possible.

The idea of "Slow" becomes increasingly more attractive and the philosopher Guttorm Fløistad summarizes the ideas behind the slow movement: "The only thing for certain is that everything changes. The rate of change increases. If you want to hang on you better speed up. That is the message of today. It could however be useful to remind everyone that our basic needs never change. The need to be seen and appreciated! It is the need to belong. The need for nearness and care, and for a little love! This is given only through slowness in human relations. In order to master changes, we have to recover slowness, reflection and togetherness. There we will find real renewal."

Let's remember that parable of Jesus where the wise man builds his house slowly on the rock in contrast to the man who presumably built the house rather quickly on the shifting sand! Following the way of Jesus, the solid rock in changing times, can renew our lives so that we can be wholly focused on living in God's love, letting go of the fear that holds us back.

Love, Jo