

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Dressing up



Dear Friends,

The wooden trunk was full of dressing up clothes that relatives had given to me, reminding me of their lives; a Victorian nightdress that belonged to an aunt, a hat from my grandfather, a smart black fifties suit that my Mum had worn as her "going away outfit", a Dutch national costume and other treasure. As a child I would take the clothes out and put them on. Each of these precious garments helped to remind me of the people that they belonged to, their earlier lives when they were younger, times I had not known them. The clothes helped me understand who I was in the history of my family and those who had gone before me.

Looking forward to my son Tom and Roshni's wedding in August, I have the opportunity to dress in clothes that belong to the family again, this time the new part of our family, our Gujarati relatives from India and Leicester. The women on Tom's side are all encouraged to wear fuchsia pink saris which belong to Roshni's family, beautifully embroidered with diamante trimmings. This colour of pink is the auspicious colour for the groom and Roshni's relatives will be wearing their special colour, light blue; special, and ritually appropriate clothes for the Hindu ceremony. The other outfit for mother of the bridegroom is proving impossible to choose and at the time of writing this, despite hours of patient waiting outside fitting rooms and encouraging comments by Doug, I still have not found the right thing! It is so much easier to wear my clergy dress as there is not so much choice and thank goodness liturgical wear covers everything! Choosing clothes that celebrate and stand the test of time in the photographs, reflecting

something of ones self is very difficult! Ginni, our new Team Curate, when ordained will wear clerical clothes for the first time - the shirt and collar and during services a cassock and surplice or an alb and stole, all reminding her of the role to which she has been called to serve as Deacon among us in Hertford.

"Clothe yourself with Christ", St Paul reminds us in his epistle to the Romans; how meaningful this has become for me, thinking about all the dressing up. How close I felt as a child to my relatives when I put on the dressing up clothes, how much more I understood the hidden part of their lives. How privileged I am to be able to wear a sari, enabling me to become part of a Hindu family and celebrate that Hindu part of the wedding according to the Hindu traditions. How impossible it is to find a suitable wedding outfit for after the Christian part of the wedding outside the Church door! Finally, and most importantly, the smart new clerical clothing that Ginni will wear enabling her to feel and manifest her new role as deacon, serving Christ and the people of God.

Clothing ourselves in Christ means surrounding ourselves with Christ, being and feeling as connected as we do to our own clothes, one Bible commentator put it this way, "*to put on Christ is to possess Christ, to have him in us, and us in him*".

We all wear clothes; they express something of who we are. Perhaps when we put them on day by day we can be reminded us of this text and be mindful of Christ's close presence, in us and around us – and pray that every day we may we can show something of his love to all we meet.. We could take up the challenge of the old

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hymn *"put on the gospel armour, each piece put on with prayer, if duty calls or danger be never wanting there!"*

Love,
Jo