

# All Saints Alive

## VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

### Remembering



Dear Friends,

A friend had his laptop stolen recently. He was very displeased, as you can imagine, but what he was especially saddened by was the loss of the photographs of the family and their holidays. He kicked himself that he hadn't backed them up. The photos of holiday and family life can act as spurs to memory.

Now he has only his memories. Yet, imperfect as they may be they are still there in his mind. And though the photos may be valuable, and some of the events become lost, the memory may recall aspects which the camera never captured, and perhaps no camera could, for the feelings of enjoyment, love and togetherness cannot be captured by pixels or film.

November is a time of memories in the church, as All Souls leads into All Saints, quickly followed by Remembrance Day, a time for the whole community to remember those fallen in war.

Memories of our loved ones can be very mixed, with a natural sense of loss yet also thankfulness at having known that special person. The tragedy of war also saddens us, yet the sacrifice of so many to defend our nation and our values can also feel moving in a positive way.

When we look back, we may well have a mental picture of a special person – or a set of people – in our minds. Just how accurate that picture is may be open to question since our thoughts can become idealised as we remember particular things and forget others.

Likewise, photos are usually posed, whether on holiday, in the garden or in a studio – then the people walk away, cease their projection of a smile, take their arm from your shoulder, whatever....

Our physical memories are very important, of course, but surely it is their personhood which is the most valuable ultimately. We may remember integrity, selflessness, care, sacrifice, love and these are all spiritual qualities.

When we remember people, something of their personhood remains in our memory, and it may well offer us ongoing inspiration and value, indeed perhaps those relationships remain a source of meaning and purpose which we often scarcely realise.

In remembering Saints, meaning holy people, we value what they stood for, often at great personal cost.

Of course they were by no means perfect, and we are not either. But their faith and hope is something we can share in today, as the idea of "all saints" means all God's people, which can be any one of us who will believe and follow Christ's way of love. It is wonderful, yet it does have to be lived out in a world of conflict and uncertainty.

Among all the questions about our life in this world, with its suffering and pain, we have a way of hope to follow with positive, eternal values, following a Lord who endured pain and laid down his life for those He loved.

Love,  
Jo