

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



True Security

Dear Friends,

Security is as important to us today as it had been in Gospel times. Last month we heard how Peter the disciple, the chief priests and Pilate had all been concerned about security.

For us today everything from tyre treads to investment advice is marketed with a thirty-second story line that features a threat to our security and then answers the threat with the product offered for sale. The tyre commercials are generally set on a dark and stormy night, and they often feature a woman driving a toddler somewhere.

Politicians often have a more subtle message but one that is equally concerned with leaving us feeling just a little insecure-insecure, that is, until we vote for the preferred candidate, vying to be identified as the one who will be the most tough on crime, ensure that we have the best services for all our needs, particularly healthcare and other worries we may have. Everyone is interested in keeping us safe. Mobile phones, security systems, taking our shoes off in the airport security line, getting the right medical tests: almost everything can be sold as a way to keep us free from threat.

"We'll make the tomb as secure as we can." But it just doesn't work! It doesn't work for Peter to follow Jesus from a safe distance. It doesn't work for Pilate to wash his hands and declare himself innocent. It doesn't work for the chief priests to stop Jesus' teaching. Then there are the women at the tomb seeking the security of doing what they can. They discover the empty tomb and they are told, "Don't be afraid".

As the first Christians came to recognize the risen Christ, they experienced boldness and freedom of speech that surprises those of us who read their stories. It is as if their security came from the inside out. They were not afraid of people who scoffed at their claims. They were not afraid of authorities who ordered them to stop speaking of Jesus. They were free from what the neighbours thought about them and free from what the established power structure could do to them.

What might that kind of freedom mean for us? How might it change the way we listen to the nightly news? How might it change the way we pass a stranger? How might it change the way we imagine who is against us and who is for us?

I'm not saying that no one ever means us harm. Certainly, the first disciples were often in harm's way after their experience of Christ's resurrection. When they were threatened, the threat did not own them. It did not define them. Someone else's power over them did not become the only thing they knew about themselves. They also knew that even after all their mistakes, after all their displays of cowardice and foolishness and fear, Jesus had come back to them. He had gone ahead of them and he had promised to be with them till the close of the age.

Do not be afraid. God is creating a new heaven and a new earth. Do not be afraid. Our life and our security are where they have always been, with Christ in God. They are not locked away as in the tomb, as Christ is risen!

Love, Jo

A prayer for us all

Risen Lord Jesus, victorious over death, in compassion for your troubled friends, you appeared in many places that they might dare again to trust.

In a world full of so much fear, strengthen us also with signs of your presence.

Meet us on the way so that we might be no longer afraid.

Free us from everything that would lead us to doubt your love for us and for the world and inspire our witness to the joy and the hope of your resurrection.

Amen

Twelve Ways to Live out the Resurrection in our Lives

The Spiritual Writer Richard Rohr suggests twelve ways in which we can live the Resurrection in our lives, in his book *Immortal Diamond*:

1. Refuse to identify with negative blaming, antagonistic or fearful thoughts (We may not be able to stop having them but we don't need to pursue them!)
2. Apologise when we hurt someone or spoil a situation
3. Undo our mistakes by positive action towards the other person or situation
4. Don't indulge or believe the superficial identity that we give ourselves (that which our mind has concocted and society somehow seems to expect of us)
5. Choose to be who God created us, to be our true selves, as often as possible throughout the day

6. Always seek to change ourselves before trying to change others
7. Choose as much as possible to serve rather than be served
8. Whenever possible, seek the common good over our mere private good
9. Give preference to those in pain, excluded or disabled
10. Seek just systems and policies even over charity as this is longer lasting
11. Ensure we live out what we say
12. Never doubt that life is all about God's Love

Congratulations

To Jo on being made an Honorary Canon of St Alban's Cathedral. She will be installed on Saturday 3rd May during Choral Evensong at 16:00. All welcome!

There will also be a special lunch after the morning service on Sunday 4th May here at All Saints as Canon Jo returns to the parish.

Making someone an Honorary Canon is a very special way of acknowledging their exceptional priestly ministry, of linking the Abbey with the Diocese and providing a channel for communication. There will be opportunities to preside at the Eucharist at the Shrine of St Alban and to preach at Sunday evensong on occasions.

Jo will be installed into a Canon's stall in the Quire of the Abbey, her seat being named after Alice de Claremont.

Her brother, the Revd Michael Roden, will also be installed as a Canon, which is also a cause for celebration and something of a marvel as a sister and brother attain this position at the same time.

Please pray for Jo and for Michael at this significant time for their ministry in the Church of Christ.