

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



“The peace of the Lord be always with you”

Dear Friends,

When the Peace was reintroduced into the Communion service over 50 years ago and clergy and congregations were encouraged to turn and greet one another, some people took up the idea with enthusiasm whilst others did not feel quite so sure about it.

Apparently, there still is a Church in Yorkshire where a notice in red is fixed to the vicar's stall for visiting clergy: 'We do not have the Peace in this church and we do not shake hands'.

Thank goodness this attitude is very rare as the Peace is very important. From earliest Christian times Paul writes to the church in Rome and Corinth *'Greet one another with a holy kiss'*.

A special meaning attached to a meeting of people who shared a Christian faith.

Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel teaches us that it is meaningless to worship in the hope of putting ourselves in a good relationship with God if our human relationships are faulty. Justin, Martyr and early Christian writer, says that *after prayers and before the table is prepared and the bread and wine offered, we greet one another.*

It looks as though Cranmer had intended to include the phrase

'The Peace of the Lorde be always with you: And with thy spirite'

in the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549 but by 1552 these greetings were taken out. So for 400 years it was not used in the C

of E - until Series 3 suggested a 'hand clasp or similar action!'

Certainly, the Peace sets our faith into action as it is inclusive. Here around us are people that God has given us to worship and work with, and they may not necessarily be those that we may have chosen! Our life in Christ should change the way we behave towards one another. We can welcome new people, new gifts and opportunities.

Peace is also about reconciliation.

Reconciliation is true coming together, yes we will have our differences. After all didn't Paul and the apostles have their arguments and difficulties with one another? But we are called to recognise in each person, even someone we find difficult and disagree with strongly, a person whom God loves, and someone for whom Jesus died. It means being open to see the truth in the other person's view, and not letting our anger or resentment fester away and turn into something that may alienate us from God.

Sometimes we talk the talk of reconciliation in Church, but fail to act on it ourselves.

Paul says in his letter to the Colossians;

*Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together
And let the Peace of Christ rule in your hearts'.*

To love is to value that person as God does, and for God's sake. So, the Peace reminds us that our union in Christ is stronger than our human differences, and this can be

costly, but is vital for our wellbeing as a person and as a Church.

'Christ is our peace. He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross. We meet in *his* name and we share *his* peace.'

Love,
Jo

Sunday Trading: Any advantage elusive



Chancellor George Osborne's recent Budget included a proposal to allow local control over liberalising Sunday trading.

The campaign in the 1990s for more Sunday trading was presented as a matter of freedom: "We should be able to shop on Sunday if we want," but it was not about creating a more just society – it was about trying to find business advantage. A determined lobby successfully argued against total deregulation to preserve some of the value of a shared day off and some protection for retail workers and associated employees.

The legislation, which was passed in 1994, was a compromise which tried to balance rights and opportunities for all sections of society. That must still be the objective today.

Retail and associated workers are hardly well off, and it is they who will pay the price of longer opening hours on Sundays. While most of their bosses will still enjoy weekends off, many retail workers already find they have no choice over Sunday working. They have lost, for a large part, the premium payments they enjoyed at first. In addition, they will face more childcare costs, which will probably be more expensive on a Sunday, or lose precious family time.

The same claims in favour of Sunday trading are being made now as 21 years

ago – that the economy will grow and that people will not have to work if they don't want to. This time there is even more compelling evidence about how wrong this is.

The 2012 Olympic Games experience, when shops were opened for longer hours, is not persuasive. The growth in business in large shops took place at the expense of small shops, which lost business. There is only so much money in the economy, and loading businesses with the greater costs involved in longer opening hours cannot lead to growth.

Some distinguished business leaders voiced these arguments, before and after the Olympics, for example Stuart Rose, former executive chairman of Marks & Spencer, and Justin King, when he was CEO of Sainsbury's. The Association of Convenience Stores, another part of vital social fabric, has surveyed this and leading accountants Deloitte also take this line.

More Sunday shopping is at odds with the Big Society, the vision outlined by David Cameron in 2010. Greater human flourishing is unlikely to come from even more consumerism. Our laws need to encourage citizens to be good neighbours, volunteers, carers and parents, which requires a balance of work and rest.

Research from the National Centre for Social Research shows how important this shared day of rest is for families and for relationships to flourish. If the time available on Sundays for family interactions is diminished (through the need to work) it is not made up during the week.

Our heritage is six days' work, one day's rest. We are zealous about preserving built heritage, and pay the considerable price for that because we recognise the social benefit to be gained. Yet this piece of cultural heritage is just as valuable and worth retaining, because it has real value to shaping what kind of society we want to be. That should be at the heart of our politics.

Alan, St Albans