

St David's Messenger

SEPTEMBER 2011

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STRIVING FOR THE IDEAL

In the aftermath of the disturbances in England that took place last month, the debate ensues about our response to this type of lawlessness, as well as to the reasons why this happened. There seems to be widespread agreement that the actions of people involved indicate a breakdown in the concept of personal responsibility in our society.

All social structures depend on individuals taking responsibility for their actions. Self-control and respect for others constrain and prevent us from turning negative feelings into actions that are detrimental to individuals and community at large. Morality – personal and collective – is one of the gels that holds us together and enables us to function in a civilised manner. But what *is* morality? One person's sense of morality is likely to be informed by what she or he believes about the world in which they live. This leads us to ask other questions: Are there moral absolutes? Are there moral boundaries beyond which we can't or shouldn't venture?

There are no easy answers to those questions, but the Bible gives indicators about the limits of some of these boundaries. In the Old Testament, it is Moses who receives the Ten Commandments, a set of tenets from our Judaeo-Christian past on which our legal code was originally and partially based. These include rules like, do not

steal, do not murder, do not commit adultery, rules for practical and right living that provide us with a moral compass. Jesus, however, suggested a more streamlined and radical approach to this canon of law, one which is based upon love and respect. He summed up the Jewish law in just two sentences: Love God, love your neighbour.

It would be too simplistic to say that a lack of either of these is the sole reason why so many people took to our streets in a frenzy of lawlessness in August. There are other reasons, I'm sure, but what I think we can say is that collectively we *have* lost a sense of a love of God, and following on from that, a sense of love and respect for other people.

I fear that there is a danger that the national debate which has started in the wake of the rioting and looting will be forgotten by Christmas and that the whole problem will disappear into the 'long grass'. I hope it won't because this affects us all. Another danger is that in the understandable and proper call for just retribution against the criminal behaviour that took place over several nights in August, we will overlook the need for justice to be seen to be done in other areas of our national life.

In calling the ancient Israelites to righteous living, the prophet Amos used the analogy of God

laying a plumb-line against a wall to see how true and just the nation of Israel was. It was found to be seriously lacking in this respect. This is something similar to what we've been doing in the wake of these disturbances, but this time to *our* national life.

We observe Jesus, through the manner of his living and in the gospels, continually challenging perceptions of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, and we need to remind ourselves – as politicians and other national figures already have in the national debate – that the perpetrators of wrongdoing and injustice are to be found not only on our streets, but also in other spheres of public life; amongst those with power – the power of great wealth and the power of influence, and quite often the latter of those two is a corollary of the former.

It would be a missed opportunity if, in applying the metaphorical plumb-line to those arrested in August, we ignored other areas of our national life altogether which also need closer scrutiny. No one sector of the community has a monopoly on wrongdoing - all of us can fall short of the ideal - but we all have a stake in ensuring that the highest possible standards, in terms of good behaviour and respect for the law, are kept, and kept by everyone regardless of who they are.

Best wishes,
Robert Williams.

Published by the people of St David's Church for all local residents

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KIDS CORNER

Hi! Welcome to your corner for our chat, a prayer and a puzzle. We welcome all our new readers!

We hope and pray you will get well if you're poorly!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU! if you're a year older this month!

(Little Jim—"Hello Brian! What are we talking about this month?") Hello Little Jim! I'm going to tell you about 9 THINGS GOD WON'T ASK YOU *and* 9 THINGS GOD WILL ASK YOU BEFORE YOU ENTER HEAVEN.

God won't ask you what kind of car you drove.

- He'll ask you how many people you gave a lift to.

God won't ask you how many rooms your house had.

- He'll ask you how many people you welcomed into your house.

God won't ask you about the "brand names" in your wardrobe.

- He'll ask you the names of those you helped to clothe.

God won't ask you what your job title was.

- He'll ask you if you worked to your best ability.

God won't ask you how many friends you had.

- He'll ask to how many people you were a friend.

God won't ask you in what neighbourhood you lived.

- He'll ask you how you treated your neighbours.

God won't ask you about the colour of your skin.

- He'll ask you about the things in your heart.

God won't ask you how much pay you got.

- He'll ask about your generosity to others.

God won't ask why it took you so long to find Him and worship Him.

- He'll welcome you into Heaven.

(Little Jim—"Gosh! God knows all about your good or bad behaviour and is generous to you.")

PRAYER

Thank you, Lord, for being loving and kind to me, even though I have been bad in the past. Forgive me for my badness. Amen.

PUZZLE

Find 5 buildings from these clues.

A hot cross one, an American girl and a cry of pain!

Pull the Queen along!

Take one of Father Christmas's laughs and use!

Off with the ice block!

Not a heavy building!

Find 5 flowers from the next clues.

A fall out of a winter sky!

A short crocodile goes in front of us!

A lily that's not dry!

It sounds like a shouted greeting to a short CYNTHIA!

A country where motor vehicles live!

(Little Jim—"Can I tell a joke, Brian?")

Yes, certainly!

(Little Jim—"What did the traffic warden say to the frog who was illegally parked? - Hop it, or you'll get toad away!")

That was funny, Little Jim! Fancy him FROGETTING where he parked!

Well that's all for now!

See you in October—The month of HARVEST!

Take care! Brian.

SERVICE TIMES AT ST DAVID'S

Sunday

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.30 am Sung Eucharist

Except

2nd Sunday

10.30 am Family/Parade Service

11.30 am Holy Communion

Wednesday

WHAT'S ON IN THE GLADSTONE HALL

(entrance in church car park,
Rocky Lane)

MONDAYS

AGE CONCERN LUNCH CLUB

12noon. Phone 228 6881 to enquire. Everyone over 60 welcome!

HELEN O'GRADY DRAMA ACADEMY

4.00 pm. For age 5+. For further details phone 482 0443.

TUESDAYS

GLADSTONE BABE AND TODDLERS PLAYGROUP

1.30pm to 3.00pm during school term time. Children, bring your carers along for a cuppa, whilst you play with our toys.

VESTRY HOUR

6.00-7.00 pm in Parish Office, Gladstone Hall. A member of clergy will be available.

KEEP-FIT

6pm to 7pm. Come along for an hour of gentle exercise to music.

YOGA

Cost £5—Please bring a mat and bottle of water.

WEDNESDAYS

HATHA YOGA

9.30-10.45am - week commencing 21st September—Level suited for mixed ability from beginner to experienced. Cost £5. Please bring non-slip yoga mat and wear comfortable loose clothing.

Phone Wendy on 07749 503855, e-mail moran86@btinternet.com.

JUMPING JACKS

12.30-1.30pm, commencing 14th September.

THURSDAYS

MUSICAL MINIS

(For under 5's) 9.45-10.30am, commencing 8th September. Please phone Cathie for details 486 4735 or see www.musicalminis.co.uk

CHILDWALL WARD COUNCILLORS SURGERY

11.30am-12.30pm—(1st Thursday every month).

FRIDAYS

ZUMBA

6.00-7.00pm. Cost £3.50. Don't forget your water bottle!