

intouch

NEWSLETTER

Benefice of Clothall, Rushden, Sandon,
Wallington, and Weston



Welcome to the latest in touch.

Well here we are halfway through August and I think I am developing rising damp! This warm, wet weather has been quite difficult to deal with – I never know exactly what to wear for the temperature changes so constantly. Last Sunday we had a terrific storm in the afternoon, and I had to drive through ten separate floods to get from Sandon to Clothall to take the afternoon service, very much missing my old car which would have handled it with ease. Mind you my brambles are flourishing again and growing at a mile a minute, time to find the secateurs I think and tackle them before they start biting. How are your gardens - time for another round of benefice pictures if you would be kind enough to send them, they make In Touch look so cheerful and personal. **With blessings Fiona**

Sunflowers at
Cumberlow Green,
photo courtesy of
Sandra Sargusingh



St James the Least of All *On how to survive a weekend away with the young people*

The Rectory, St James the Least of All

My dear Nephew Darren

I think your idea for both our Confirmation groups getting together for a weekend away – socially distanced, of course - was excellent and our meeting last week drew most of the plans together. We didn't take any minutes, so let me record the decisions I believe we made.

Since all of us have to sleep far apart at the centre, I am prepared to spend the nights at a local hotel. By chance, I have found that there is a four star one only a few miles away, so I have booked myself in.

As the dining area in the youth centre may be cramped, I am also willing to have dinner each evening at the hotel, thereby creating more space for the rest of you. An additional sadness is that, since breakfast at the hotel is not served until 8am, I will not be able to join you either for your pre-breakfast dip in the nearby stream. It would be grossly unfair to expect you to pack lunch for me, so I will arrange for the hotel to provide me with a picnic hamper for one which I can have while you all enjoy your cheese and pickle sandwiches.

I think it will be an excellent learning experience if you prepare all the teaching sessions yourself, but be

assured that I will always be on hand to give the advice of experience. That large armchair near the fire in the common room seems to be the best place for me to sit, so I can keep an eye on proceedings, while I take on the responsibilities for stoking the fire. This reminds me; do make sure that the young people are encouraged to saw enough logs each morning for me to fulfil my obligations.

Naturally, my arthritis will prevent me being able to accompany you on your afternoon hikes, but I will cheerfully park my car wherever you leave the minibus, to provide a second vehicle in case of emergencies. I do not mind in the least waiting all those long hours until you get back; I have already found an attractive tea shop in the village.

I am fully aware that not sleeping or dining at the centre, not being responsible for preparing the teaching, nor being involved on the walks will mean that my contributions will be ever so slightly limited, but these are sacrifices I gladly make in order to give you further experience in your ministerial career.

Your loving uncle, Eustace



A Prayer for these days of confusion

Jesus, you are the light of the world

*Jesus, you are the light of the world
A light that no darkness can quench*

*Upon your church,
Wrestling with the darkness of evil
Battling against doubt
Let your light shine*

*Upon world governments
Facing gloom and despair
Battling against disaster
Let your light shine*

*Upon those who live in the shadows
Caught up in sorrow and strife
Struggling against oblivion
Let your light shine*

David Adams



El Greco: *Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple* (c.1600)

The irascible Art teacher of my first few years at Senior School was an unhappy man feared by all and loved by none. The only way to acquire from him a grudging sliver of favour was to make the characters in our paintings completely enormous. Inept with brush and paint though I was, I managed within the space of one term to rise from 23rd in class to 2nd by doing just that.

Domenikos Theotocopoulos - 'El Greco' (the Greek), would have been at the top of my form. 'No worse fate can befall a figure than that it should be undersized' this argumentative outsider retorted when criticized for his disproportionately constructed characters. El Greco had moved through Italy before settling in Toledo and the Catholic Church in Spain was the frequently bemused recipient of his genius. Having undergone the shock of the Reformation it was now asked of artists

that they leave behind the complacent, superstition loaded imagery of the past. The beautiful and balletic images of the Crucifixion such as Raphael painted were replaced by dramatic creations of gospel immediacy, seizing the minds and hearts of beholders, aiming to inspire faith, penitence and renewed confidence in Catholicism.

So Christ, tall and powerful, painted in El Greco's idiosyncratic cool tones in fluid dynamic brushstrokes, comes swinging through the traders who have turned the Temple into a 'den of thieves'. At first sight all is fear and turmoil, the traders' bodies swaying in recoil as the judgement of Jesus is thrashed into them with startling righteous anger. The strong diagonal made by their arms and bodies points towards a small frieze at top left, which depicts Adam and Eve being driven out of the Garden of

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus
Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us
from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

If you would like to donate to any of our churches in the current crisis - details are below. We would be very grateful in your help to keep our churches going.

Thank you.

PCC OF RUSHDEN
LLOYDS BANK: 30-94-30 A/C 01845350

SANDON PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
BARCLAYS BANK: 20-73-26 A/C 53610802

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Eden. As it was in the beginning, is now. Conflict always arrests the human eye so we may not notice that the right side of El Greco's painting is very different to the left. Jesus' left hand is held palm down, offering perhaps a blessing to those thoughtfully debating the meaning of what they witness. Above their heads is a frieze of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Isaac, God staying the hand of his servant and rescinding his murderous command. So for the group on this side there is redemption, a withdrawal of severe judgement. The basket of goods gripped desperately by the disarrayed woman on the ground to the left is balanced by another basket containing offerings perhaps, carried with grace by the woman on the right. Towards the Temple she turns to offer the praise which for Christ is the true and only meaning of the house of God.

Gorse – cheerful and perfumed, but prickly!

The old saying 'Kissing is out of season when the gorse is not in bloom' is based on the fact that it is a rare time of year when a flower or two cannot be found. The bush itself, growing on heaths and moors is well-known for its vicious spikes. This is its answer to the problem of producing leaves that will withstand wind, rain and hungry animals.

The golden yellow flowers are at their absolute best in spring when the bushes, growing often to a height of seven to ten feet, seem to glow in the countryside. They attract bees and other pollen-seeking insects

and many of us enjoy the rich coconut-like perfume as well as the joyful colour. The sharp foliage gives protection to several species of bird as they nest deep in these bulging bushes, and larger animals such as sheep and cows, if grazing nearby, will take advantage of gorse as a very effective windbreak.

In the past, gorse, also known as 'furze' or 'whin', was used as fuel as it burns very readily when dry. This has caused many serious moorland fires in recent years, but gorse is fortunately a resilient species and

quickly sends up new shoots from the burnt stumps that remain. It is also apparently somewhat susceptible to frost, but will recover quickly with new growth.

A member of the pea family, its seeds are set in brown, somewhat unattractive pods, which on a hot summer's day can be heard popping, or they may be provoked into doing so when held in a hot hand. However, what might surprise us even more is that in the past, in country districts, it was used for drying washing, as the thorns would allow nothing to escape, even in the strongest of winds.

