

The Rectory, 1 Rectory Close, Fryerning Lane, Ingatestone,
CM40DB
01277352562 patrick.sherring@ingatestoneparishchurch.org.uk

Dear friends,

In healing of our spirit was something that I raised last month. It is something that is integral to the Christian understanding of life. We need to feel that we need God to heal our spirit. For many people I wonder if this sounds both rather strange and rather frightening? After all we construct all kinds of coping mechanisms to help us get through the day. I recall some years ago a friend of mind saying that he did not agree with “all this looking into oneself. It does not help.” Of course what he was actually saying was, “I do not want to spend time looking into myself. I am coping quite well now”. And of course he was and is coping quite well. The point is, could he, and others, be coping better? Jesus said that he came to give us life in all its fullness. Could my friend really say that about his life, that he experiences it in all its fullness. St. Paul talked about the Christian growing in love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control. Could my friend say that about his life? Could I? Could you? The Christian life should be about growing in these gifts of the spirit so we can experience life in all its fullness. For the Christian this is an on-going journey, with unfortunately many hesitations or even steps back on the way. But at least we know where and why we are trying to develop. With this point of view life takes on a new dynamism and our spirit becomes healthy, or healthier.

One of the big difficulties in life can be dealing with bereavement. Our society really does death very badly, No-one wants to talk about their own death or how they have dealt with the death of others. Yet we all know that bereavement is a universal human experience. Everyone you know has had people die who were important to them. Yet we shy away from it. Talking with staff at the crematorium in Chelmsford, they are sad when families appear to arrange nothing more than having a favourite piece of music played for a deceased. This is just the closest to doing nothing at all, and is a symptom of a society that is simply avoiding talking about death. On our Ingatestone

P.C.C. away day someone asked, “So is life just a preparation for our death?” How would you answer that?

Taking a weekly assembly at the Church Junior School is a great privilege. In the middle of June I talked about giving thanks to God for people who we have known. About a third of the children had visited Fryerning cemetery and some had been to other cemeteries. There were two children there who had lost a parent. It was very important to help the children not to avoid the reality of the loss of loved ones. We also talked about the life and death of Claude Thesinger Ashton, remembered on our War memorial and buried at Fryerning who had captained the England Football team. This was very real to the children as the assembly was the same day that England played Slovenia in the World Cup. Claude died in a R. A. F. training accident at the age of forty one.

I am delighted that we will be hosting a course on The Grief Journey. We already host a monthly meeting on the first Tuesday of the month, 10.30- 12 in the Parish Room for a Bereavement group run by The Co-op Funeral Directors. Attendance here is usually in double figures and the group also arrange social activities. Anyone is welcome. Bennetts have sponsored the Grief Journey course in other parts of the borough of Brentwood and it has been very successful and much appreciated by those who have attended. Of course attendance is brave, because we do not want to acknowledge how much bereavement hurts, even if it is after many years. The course begins with understanding grief, looks at how our emotions respond through guilt and anger, moves on to consider loneliness and the adjustments that we have to make before we are able to re-organize our lives. I know that there are literally hundreds of people in our communities for whom this course would be a very helpful experience. It will be run very gently and sensitively, and is suitable for people of faith and those who are not. I pray that they will be brave enough to make this a real priority. For I am sure that working through this course and the issues raised would be truly helpful. It would enable people to heal their spirit.

Yours in Christ, *Patrick*