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Dear friends,

As I write this letter I have just come in from the Junior School after taking my weekly assembly. I began by asking the children how many of them had watched television before coming to school that day. The answer was over 80%. I asked those to keep up their hand, then asked those who had not watched t.v. but has listened to either the radio, an ipod or another personal music devise. More hands went up, until we had over 90% of the children. Even the teachers were startled at this result. Just think of all that information, music, images going into the children's minds, and this was just one morning. I then asked them how many had walked past the church in recent weeks and seen that something new was screened off. The results were almost the opposite of the previous ones. A few had walked past the church. Practically no-one had seen anything was happening. I leave you to draw your own conclusions!

Of course the worry is that we increasingly live in our own internal worlds and not the real world. As I heard someone say recently, "We should not watch Friends we should get friends". We cannot pretend that the real world is not out there. Having the new War memorial is exactly about reminding us of the real world and the impact it had on our small communities. People of all ages will now be able to read the names of all those who lost their lives in the two World Wars. I urge you to walk up and take time just reading through them. You will be shocked how many. You will be surprised how many of the names are of someone from a family still in the village. This adds a great deal to our village and I have been delighted to work in partnership with the local Rotary Club on the project. I am honoured to be leading the dedication service on June 18th at 4.30. This will include members of the Royal Anglian Regiment and a band. It will be a very memorable occasion in the history of our village.

Dr. Ann Davidson, Bishop of Chelmsford's Inter-faith Adviser has become a good friend to our churches. I knew Ann when I worked in Leyton. In recent years Ann has given lectures at

Ingatestone Parish Church on the development of World faiths and specifically on Islam and Judaism. This year she will be talking about Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Many people in our villages are of an age when there was no education about the beliefs of World Faiths in school. You only have to watch the children coming and going from the Anglo-European School to know that the multi-cultural reality of the world we live in impacts on our doorstep. There are also increasingly members of other faith communities living either amongst us or near to us. You might be amazed to know that I had a long conversation recently with the CO-OP Funeral Directors about a large Buddhist funeral that they had in Chelmsford and about the rituals that took place in the funeral home. We all need to know more about the customs and beliefs of others. This is not that we can live in some kind of Spirituality Super-market and shop for the parts we like. My feeling has always been that knowledge of the beliefs of other actually helps clarify our own. We can see the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Christian message against this backdrop. Not all religions are the same. Their quest to understand life and our relationship with forces beyond ourselves may be the same, but the answers they give are very different. Join Ann on Mondays 5th, 12th and 19th at 7.45 p.m.

The realities and consequences of wars and the diverse nature of the world community and increasingly our own community are two realities of life that we cannot shut out. Nor should we want to shut them out. I never ceased to be amazed that some people think Christianity is about an escape from the real world. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is about being equipped by God through the forgiveness offered by the death and resurrection of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit to face the realities of the real world. Of course there are many diversions that we like to use to help us avoid facing the realities of life. That is why we need silence in our lives. We need times to reflect and be still. June 18th will be very noisy whilst the service is on, and rightly so. But once it is finished, we will all have somewhere to stand silently and reflect. Our prayer should be that no-one ever need to have a campaign for a future War Memorial for our villages.

Yours in Christ, *Patrick*