

THIS & THAT (219)

For two years I taught English to the boys of *Alan Wilson Technical High School* in Rhodesia. They wore khaki uniforms with black and red jerseys and black and red blazers. Most were exceedingly pimply.

Peanut butter sandwiches

It was their school lunches that did it. Peanut butter sandwiches. The smell of them still makes me feel ill. Tacky, viscous, gunky, gloopy, gluey, gooey. How the stuff sticks to the top of the mouth.

On a hot day, after long confinement in a plastic lunch-box, their stink when the box is opened, frizzes beards, curdles milk, and sends blow flies buzz, buzz, buzzing into a frenzy of aerobatic dives, climbs and somersaults around the classroom. After lunch the school yard was littered with crusts and corners of peanut butter sandwiches. Pied crows, holding their beaks, pecked at them disdainfully.

Salted fish

Jesus was a teacher. A better one than me. He didn't despise his pupils' food. A young lad sent off for the day by his mother with five little bread rolls and two small fish, didn't revolt Jesus. Though salted fish on a hot summer's day in Palestine must have ponged as pungently as any peanut butter sandwich.

Jesus was a better teacher than me in other ways too. He was interesting to listen to and told fascinating stories. My pupils when bored with poetry, or mystified by grammar would sneak their hands under the lids of their desk, open their lunch box and break off pieces of sandwich to eat. The smell gave them away. Not so the boy with the fish and loaves. He was so interested he forgot about his lunch until the end of the day. It was only when he heard someone say to Jesus, "*What can we give all of them to eat?*" that his tummy rumbled and lunch was remembered.

No laughing matter

Also remembered were some of the points Jesus had made in his stories. Those to do with sharing, being generous and loving your neighbour. So much so that he responded to the man who had asked Jesus: "*What can we give them all to eat?*" by saying, "*I have my lunch here, five little loaves and two fish, I would love to share them....*" The man he spoke to would have thought the offer a bit of a joke, but he took the boy to Jesus nonetheless and said, doubtless with a chuckle in his voice: "*Perhaps this will do to feed a mere 5000 people? Five loaves and two fish?*"

There was no laughter from Jesus. He looked at the loaves and fish. He looked at the lad. He perceived genuine generosity. "*Get everyone to sit down....*" he said. He blessed the boy's lunch, began to share it and everyone was fed. Everyone. Twelve baskets were left over.

The power of one

Was it a bare-faced, shameless miracle or a more subtle one to do with love and sharing? Who knows? Who cares?

A simple point was being made. No matter how insignificant we feel or indeed are, no matter how few our talents, and gifts, if we offer ourselves and them to God with generosity of heart, great things can be done with us, through us and for us.

The boy and his lunch remind us of the power of the small, the power of one, the power of the little. It's a truth that lies at the heart of our faith. The obscure judicial murder of an insignificant peripatetic teacher unleashed God's love dynamically in the world. A mere gibbet became the greatest of all symbols of selfless love

On the Vanity of Earthly Greatness

*The tusks that clashed in mighty brawls
Of mastadons, are billiard balls.*

*The sword of Charlemagne the Just
Is ferric oxide, known as rust.*

*The grizzly bear whose potent hug
Was feared by all, is now a rug*

*Great Caesar's bust is on the shelf,
And I don't feel so well myself. (A Guiterman)*

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THIS WEEK: 2nd SUNDAY before ADVENT 19.11.17

St Nicholas' Chapel, Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion

St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30am Holy Communion

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Family Service & Children's Club

St Luke's Sway: 6.30pm Choral Evensong

For Prayer This Week

World peace and harmony. Countries struggling under corrupt government, war and poverty. Those persecuted for their beliefs, especially our fellow Christians. Our Parish Council

Prayer requests: Heather Collings-Wells, Janet, Colin Erne, David, Vanessa and Dominic. RIP: Avril Darnton

Activities This Week

Mon 20 Nov - 4.30pm Bible Study Ph. 07786194282 for venue

Mon 20 Nov - 7.00pm St Nicholas' Chapel PCC Meeting

Tue 21 Nov - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. Seated exercise to music at St Nicholas' Pilley & refreshment

Tue 21 Nov - 12 noon St John's Funeral - Avril Darnton

Wed 22 Nov - 10.30am St Nicholas' Pilley, Communion + Coffee

Thu 23 Nov - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. As on Tuesdays

NEXT WEEK: 'CHRIST THE KING' 26 NOV 2017

St Nicholas' Chapel, Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion

St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30am Matins BCP

St John's Boldre: 10.30am Holy Communion & Children's Club

St John's Boldre: 6.30pm Choral Evensong

Dates for the Diary 2017

Fri 1 Dec - 7.30pm St John's Lily Cherpokova Concert

Sun 3 Dec - 6.30pm St Mary's - Ecumenical Advent Service

Sun 10 Dec - 3-4.00 St John's *Ringin' & Singin' for Christmas*

Mon 11 Dec - 4.00pm St John's - St Nicholas' Singers Concert

Sun 17 Dec - 6.30pm St John's - Nine Lessons & Carols

Wed 20 Dec - 2.00pm St John's Hill House Christmas Service

Thu 21 Dec - 1.30pm St John's - WG School end of term Service

Sun 24 Dec - 3.00pm St John's - Crib Service with donkeys

Sun 24 Dec - 11.00pm St John's Midnight Mass

Mon 25 Dec - 10.30am St John's Family Christmas Communion

7.00pm MONDAY, TOMORROW PCC MEETING

In St Nicholas' Chapel as usual

RINGING AND SINGING FOR CHRISTMAS

With the Sway Handbell Ringers and Milford Minstrels.

3.00-4.00pm on Sunday 10 December in St John's. If the 'Pot Pourri' is anything to go by this will be lovely. There will be tea and cakes to follow. No charge, but a retiring collection will go towards our Choir Scholarship.

ST NICHOLAS SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT

4.00pm on Monday 11 December in St John's.

Always December's highlight. One of the most enjoyable of all pre-Christmas musical treats. A glass of mulled wine and mince pies all part of the fun. Tickets £10 from Maxwell Hamilton (01590 672191), Pilley Community Shop (01590 673380) or Rosemary Adams (01590 677068).

RECEIVE THE PEWSHEET BY EMAIL

If you would like to receive this weekly pewsheet by email each week let Andrew know by email. His address is above

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

Science takes things apart to see how they work; religion puts things together to see what they mean. *Rabbi Sachs*

INTERESTING

All history is myth. It is a pattern which men weave out of the materials of the past. The moment a fact enters into history it becomes mythical, because it has been taken and fitted into its place in a set of ordered relationships which is the creation of a human mind and not otherwise present in nature. *E Powell*