

THIS AND THAT (265)

The final extract from an introduction I wrote to a collection of my father's reminiscences published in Australia. He was a remarkable fellow and one of the reasons I am a priest.....

Canon David Neaum 1912-2001

.....We took great family holidays together. A memorable one, with a single tent for the whole family, took us to Kariba Dam, which at the time was the process of being built. We crossed the Zambezi and travelled westward along its northern bank to Livingstone and the Victoria Falls. From there to Bulawayo and on home. We arrived, my father later told us, with only a half crown left in his pocket. There were other family camping holidays in Mocambique. Mostly to Beira and once to Lourenco Marques. There we revelled in the Latin cuisine, wine and way of life under a hot, tropical African sun. Hours were spent hours wandering the docks, an obsession of my father that has passed on to me.

His son's unpaid curate

On my mother's death he moved south from Brisbane to Victoria to live near to me and my family in Ararat. He took over the assistant priest's house and played a full part in the life of the parish. I had to learn to cope with a tyrannical ex-choirmaster in my own choir. It took a bit of doing. Possibly more so for him than me, but his old age brought a greater tolerance of filial incompetence.

He visited the hospital, preached, sang Evensong and took a traditional rite weekday Eucharist. He also delighted in a small vegetable garden and immersed himself in the joys of domesticity, cooking exceedingly tasty meals for himself and cakes and pastries to share with us and anyone who called. He enjoyed a long twilight ministry, revelling in priestly work, appreciative people, good talk and good food.

He was always well disciplined, never neglecting his daily office, or exceeding his self-imposed limit of two glasses of sherry or wine every evening. His remedy for illness or pain was to get up and do something. He fell and broke his hip on his way to a Friday morning, traditional rite Eucharist. This was the beginning of a physical decline that necessitated his coming to live in the Rectory with us.

There he learned to curb his impatience and to bear our more adventurous and cosmopolitan diet, rarely protesting. He enjoyed being able to remain part of a rectory family.

An idolatrous Anglican

He had an enormous influence on my life. Ensuring that I could never easily dismiss the Christian faith. I had been a part of and witness to a robust, attractive and un-hypocritical version of it from birth. Even when filled with arrogant and conventional university student doubt, I was unable ever really to let go of either the institution or the practices it demanded of me. I still call myself an idolatrous Anglican. A person who loves the Church as an institution as well as its God. For some years it was love of the institution, not the God, that held me.

My own call to priesthood became clear when I was working as a teacher in London. A religious experience turned me round when I was thousands of miles from family and home influences. Distance had enabled me to get faith into perspective. So the call arose less from a religious experience of a numinous sort than from religious experience transmitted in the ordinary living of faith by mother, father, brother and sister in home, mission and parish life.

The great wager

Well, the old fellow's now long dead. He loved God, his family and life deeply and well. There is a consolation for those of us who live just such a Christian life. One pointed out first, I think, by the mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal in his "Great Wager".

In a sense we win both ways. If my father's wealth of experience, wit, sparkle, love and goodness are now no more, are finished, done with and gone for ever, and the Christian faith he lived and espoused bunkum, so what? For just such a life remains he only sort worth living. What a life it was! Both he and I would have wanted want no other. But then it isn't bunkum.

All Andrew Neaum's weekly articles are at: <http://www.andrewneaum.com/>

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TODAY: TRINITY TWENTY 14 OCTOBER 2018

St Mary's South Baddesley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30pm Family Service

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

St Saviour's Brockenhurst: 6.30pm Group Choral Evensong

For Prayer This Week

Thanksgiving: for the God's many mercies. Pray for world peace and locally for our local Police and Judiciary.

Prayer requests: Jean Broomfield, Janet, James, Rachel, Sarah, Colin Erne, David, Vanessa & Dominic

Rest in Peace: .

Activities This Week

Tue 16 Oct - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. Seated exercise to music at St Nicholas' Pilley & refreshment

Wed 17 Oct - 10.30am Communion St Nicholas' Pilley + coffee

Wed 17 Oct - Bible Study Ph. 07786194282 for venue & time

Thu 18 Oct - 10.30am Vintage Fitness. As on Tuesdays

NEXT WEEK: TRINITY TWENTY ONE 21 OCT 2018

St Nicholas' Chapel Pilley: 8.00am Holy Communion BCP

St Mary's South Baddesley: 9.30pm Holy Communion CW

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

St Luke's Sway: 6.30pm Group Choral Evensong

Dates for the Diary 2018

Sun 4 Nov - 8.00am St Nicholas Pilley -All Saints/All Souls (HC)

Sun 4 Nov - 10.30am St John's-All Saints/All Souls (HC)

Fri 9 Nov - 10.45 St Nicholas' Chapel - Act of Remembrance

Sun 11 Nov - 10.45am St John's-Remembrance Sunday (non HC)

Sat 17 Nov - 7.00pm Memorial Hall - Benefice Quiz (St J vs StM)

Sun 2 Dec - 6.30pm St Mary's -Ecumenical Advent Service

Sun 9 Dec - 4.00pm S John's St Nicholas Choir Xmas Concert

Wed 19 Dec - 2.00pm St John's - Hill House School Christmas

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

Sun 23 Dec - 6.30pm St John's - Nine Lessons & Carols

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

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

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

SUN 4 NOV REMEMBERING OUR DEPARTED

Put the names of your departed loved ones on the list by the door or email Andrew. They will be remembered by name at our services on 4 November at which there'll be a candle to light & vases for a flower for any who brings one, as a gesture of love.

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK

Hopefully Diana and I are now back among you having spent a month travelling Australia. If we are, then I am sure it is good indeed to be back.

MANY THANKS INDEED

Many thanks indeed to John James and his splendid team of Pot Pourri conspirators, thespians, musicians and helpers. I write this before my trip to Australia, confident that it will be a memorable occasion to greet Diana and myself on our return.

NEVER EVER BORED

I can truthfully say that I have never in my life been bored, however inviting the circumstances. The most severe challenge was, I suppose, provided by the chapel services at Oundle School in the 1920s but even here, though at maximum ennui risk, and encased in sombre black and starched collar and feeling fairly Sundayish and dreary, there was always something to activate the imagination.

Arthur Marshall