

Voice from the Vicarage 16th June 2022

Off on Monday....

Dear All,

Although not noted too much in Australia, for me today is a particular day in the life of the Church. It's the remembrance of St Richard of Chichester, a beloved saint in Sussex where, as most of you know, I served first as Diocesan Missioner and then as Area Bishop of Horsham. Richard was made a bit famous by the 1973 musical *Godspell*. Was it Colleen Hewitt who sang the song here that took words from a prayer attributed to this 13th century bishop: *'Day by day, three things I pray... to see Thee more, to love Thee more, the follow Thee more...*

With the 23rd Psalm it's my practice to pray his prayer after every mass I attend.

Richard had mixed fortunes as bishop. Duly elected, King Henry III and some grumpy members of the Cathedral Chapter refused to accept him favouring another candidate. The Archbishop of Canterbury refused to accept their nomination, so an appeal was made to the Pope. He confirmed Richard's election and consecrated him in 1245. Meanwhile, the King had confiscated all the properties and revenue that belonged to the See (including a couple of rather nice castles!), and refused to return them for a couple of years.

A laughing bishop....

These sorts of intrigues were par for the course in the Middle Ages (and not just the Middle Ages!). What made Richard so beloved to the young and old of Sussex was his decision to come to the diocese without revenues or palaces to lodge with a priest in Worthing. He tirelessly travelled around his large diocese on foot living simply, even frugally, preaching and encouraging them. A vegetarian since his youth, he cultivated figs and was apparently very good at it! He was known as the laughing bishop. In all of this he was an exception to many of his brother prelates who preferred a higher life. When his revenues were eventually restored he distributed them liberally among the poor.

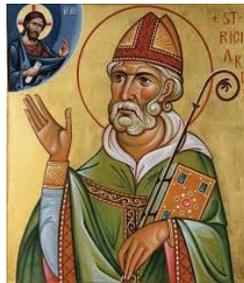
An affecting preacher, and a lover of the Eucharist, it must be admitted he had a merciless streak with corrupt clergy, and he berated priests who mumbled the Mass. But he loved them, and even when they feared his rebuke, they loved him. He was fearless of the privileged and those who exercised authority in ungodly ways. In 1253, he agreed to the Pope's request that he preach a Crusade against the Saracens, but died on the journey in Kent in 1253, aged 56. Only nine years later he was canonised.

Mm. His prayers mean a lot to me. I often thought of him as I drove (!) around West Sussex, fulfilling my episcopal duties.

May his prayer be ours! Why not pray it now?

Thanks be to Thee my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits thou has won for us, for all the pain and insults thou hast borne for us. O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may I know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, and follow Thee more nearly, day by day. Amen.

It's likely that I shall visit Chichester during my time away. I shall pray at his Shrine that the desire and hopes expressed in his prayer may fill all our hearts!



I'm grateful to the churchwardens and the bishop for their agreement that I be away for the next six weeks. I'm leaving the parish in good and capable hands. It is the tradition in Australia that if a parish priest is away for a chunk of time a 'locum' needs to be appointed who is the first point of call. Until the 20th July that is Deacon Jack, and from the 21st until my return on the 7th August it will be Father Chris Mostert. Their details are on the service paper each week. Of course it will very much be a team approach with Fr Russell and the wardens.

The daily rhythm of prayer, the heartbeat of the parish continues day by day...

My first boss, on the rare occasions he actually went away would always say to the congregation..

"I'm on holiday. You're not! Keep the show on the road". I can hear him saying it now!

Meanwhile, I've not gone yet!.

I'm so looking forward to **this** Sunday when we shall keep a Feast very dear to my heart:

CORPUS CHRISTI, the day set apart to give thanks for the gift of the Holy Eucharist.

There are the usual masses at 8 & 10, but at 6 pm **'Lamb B & B'** will take a different format with a time of **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** and prayers and meditation and song by candlelight, praying especially for Brunswick and the needs of our community. It will be followed by the usual and relaxed snack and drink opportunities.



During 'Exposition' a consecrated host from reserved in the tabernacle is placed in a 'monstrance', a sort of showcase, to allow those who love the gift and receive it as their spiritual food to meditate upon it. When I arrived at Christ Church I found three in the church safe, so this tradition seems to be something of a revival!

And finally... though the Thursday lunch and our Sunday activities in the Lamb continue as always, the café side of our witness is closed now until my return... I closed 'the Beast' down (as I have often named the coffee machine) yesterday after we closed... Strangely, it felt I was shutting off a friend I'd come to understand. It felt like I was giving an old friend a rest... him and me both!

Maybe see you Sunday. +Lindsay

NEXT WEEK'S 'VOICE FROM THE VICARAGE' WILL BE VOICE FROM THE CURATE'S FLAT Watch out for it. It may go to your junk box!!