

Dear All,

Forgive me if you thought, because of the tardiness of this week's Voice that I had given up my Thursday discipline for Lent. There are a number of reasons I won't bother to go into, but here it is!

Memories of a scratchy violin...

As it happens I am sitting in a friend's flat as I write and I can hear, through the wall next door, the sound of someone practising the violin. It's interesting how sounds and smells can almost immediately conjure up memories. For me, the sound of a violin takes me back to school days and my rather half-hearted attempts to learn the said instrument. Now it seems to me that the violin is one of those instruments that takes a lot of lessons and practice before it can be safely and fairly unleashed on an unsuspecting world. Truth is I just didn't have the commitment, and while the examiner for my 'preliminary' exam described me as 'talented', I never made it from the second violins to the first in our school orchestra. And while there are many adoring parents who, for love, are deaf to the scratchings and the wrong flats and sharps, and clap and cheer after the worst of performances, mine were not that sort of parent.

Indeed as one of six children it was probably a mistake to suggest I learn the wretched thing in the first place. My attempts at practising at home were met with derision and complaint from my siblings to the extent that while my parents paid for my lessons they actually discouraged me from practising in order to keep a semblance of peace.

I'm not sure why I'm telling you all this. It just reveals that in my youth I was selective in my perseverance, a trait that has stayed with me more than I care to admit. Another perceptive comment on a school report towards the end of my days at a leading Anglican School.. 'Tries hard at the things he likes'. Probably still a bit true.

Lenten perseverance...

So what about my Lenten perseverance? Well, as with all of you, my success or failure at my disciplines are by and large a matter between me and my Maker, and my confessor of course, but I will share with you my best *intentions*. **More silence and less unnecessary talking**, and in particular less of the sort of talk I would not really want the Lord to hear.

That itself makes me smile, since it is a vain imagining that I can keep what I say from the Lord who Scripture tells me even knows the secrets of my heart, let alone knows what comes forth from my mouth.

I am going to try and remember that God has given me a mouth first and foremost that I may sing his praises, and then to speak only the truth, and speak kindly, even if at times there are 'hard' things that must be said. (St Augustine includes in his list of duties of a bishop 'To rebuke agitators' but only in the context of 'loving them all') Be sparing in the rebuking and excessive in the love. And I shall to try to remember *not* to run away with the idea that my *opinion* is inevitably akin to the *truth*, and practice a little more reticence. One of the archdeacons in my old Episcopal area in Sussex used to talk about the virtue of inhibition..

And as for more silence, I shall be trying to spend more time near this place in our church; near the tabernacle in which the silent and ever reliable Presence of the Lord is to be found under the form of the Blessed Sacrament. I know that the more time I spend there the more I will want to be at the Eucharist, and even if my mind wanders or feels over-stuffed with other things, it will over time the silence will bring rest to me restless heart.

So let me invite you to some extra perseverance in your life with the Lord during these weeks of Lent.

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There were some lovely moments during last Sunday's mass. A member of the congregation commented to me about the blessing of having our cantors sing as we prepare to worship. It was an extra blessing to have two voices and to have some added harmony during the mass setting.

It was also good to hear **Father John Stewart** introduce our journey from Ashes to Fire.



I hope you have your copy of the booklet he has prepared to assist us with the journey. There will be copies available at the back of the church again this week, and of course I sent it by email to every one on the Voice list. It will surely help us in our common journey with Jesus.

And finally, we have a couple of candidates interested in being baptised, and I have asked Cara to walk with them as they prepare for this gift and commitment. If anyone else is interested in exploring the gifts of Baptism and Confirmation, do let me know!



Our Ekina's baptism last year. Baptisms bring so much joy!

Talking of Cara, she will be our preacher at both masses this Sunday. It will surely be a blessing!

Much love, +*Lindsay*