



AS WE BEGIN...

Dear Friends,

It's that time of year again - looking forward to what's ahead and trying to work out if we are going to be able to make any resolutions that will stick!

As part of our journey through Romans, I've been struck again by the importance of having a vision for who we are in Christ... who Jesus is calling us to become as we live the resurrection life he offers. In fact, as our desires at the deepest level are what drive us, having our most fundamental desires driven by the vision of who are in Christ is essential. So starting a new year with prayer for this vision to be renewed for each of us has to be the best beginning we can make.

ASPECTS OF LIVING

Another key learning point for me recently was from the Beautiful Lives course, part of which was thinking about aspects of living the Christian life, which we often struggle with. Those attending the course answered and ranked a questionnaire on which aspects of the Christian life are both the most difficult to live out, and most significant when they go wrong. Here are the top five we came up with...

1. Meeting disappointment or misfortune with faith and cheerfulness
2. Honouring others when they are absent
3. Forgiving others no matter how they have hurt you
4. Being free from anxiety and not worrying unnecessarily
5. Aiming for peace with all people

These aspects of life are signs of the Holy Spirit at work within us... indications that we are listening

to His gentle guidance and somehow managing to allow the desires of our new selves in Christ to be stronger than the old desires of the "flesh" and the ego. It's easy to turn the list around, say the opposite, and see the negativity that pours into our lives when we allow the "old us" to have free reign.

But it's one thing to recognise these aspects of Christian life as desirable and another to allow our Lord to shape our lives towards them. So over the next few months we are going to run a short series in the Pulse, which will look at these issues in turn and see if we can help each other grow in these virtues. (There's a wonderful old-fashioned word... I must be getting old!)



I was delighted when Mark reported that our distribution is over 200 hundred now and growing. I am aware that there is a huge amount of Christian life experience and wisdom in this network of ours and I wondered if it would be a good idea to share some of that. So, if you would like to add your insights, experiences or testimonies to support each other as we think through these big challenges in life, please do email me (julesjwilson@gmail.com) and I'll hopefully be able to include your thoughts in this series. And don't worry if you miss a particular deadline - I'm sure it will all be in God's timing :)

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So, as we begin another year, I think the responsibility from morning prayer during advent is a real encouragement for us all to grasp again the vision of who we are becoming and make our inner work, partnered with the Holy Spirit, a priority in the year ahead as we continue our walk with Jesus.

Now it is time to awake out of sleep,
for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.

Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed,

for the night is far spent.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light,

for the day is at hand.

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ

and make no provision for the flesh,

for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.

With every blessing,

Jules

DIOCESAN PRAYER DIARY which used to be included in European Anglican magazine is now available online. Do have a peep at the website and catch up with the latest news.

<https://europe.anglican.org/prayer-diary/prayer-diary>

WHO are YOU?

Last month when Mark sent out Pulse he included a questionnaire asking about our Pulse readers.

We've had a great response so far; but maybe you didn't have a chance to send your reply at the time or maybe you read the paper version of Pulse.

If you didn't respond to the questionnaire and would like to, you can just click on the 'envelope' below or complete the form on line at this address.

<https://forms.gle/jqLfE45nZSVCYKVz9>

It will only take a couple of minutes.

We'll let you know the results in next month's Pulse.

Thank you.



CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT



The church was full on the evening of 22nd December for our Service of Nine Lessons & Carols.

Afterwards Spiros brought Christmas Greetings from the Catholic community of Corfu & presented HTC with a photographic of Holy Trinity prepared for Christmas in 1908, when the congregation met in the main part of the old Ionian Parliament building.



NEW YEAR AT HTC

SUNDAY 5TH JANUARY—10:30



*Celebrate Epiphany with Family Communion,
Sunday School with Christingles with the children*

Sunday 12th January
Cutting the Vasilopita
after the 10:30 service.



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THE CHRISTMAS EVE CRIB SERVICE



FOR PRAYER AND PRAISE!

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—*John 1:12*

We pray for:-

- January 5th - Epiphany and Christingles Service, we pray for families to come and enjoy.
- January 25th - Service of Christian Unity at the Catholic Cathedral to be well attended and most of all that others will notice our good relationships. Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical and Anglican, all speaking.
- Approval of Logos Cafe plans, that this will happen before much longer.
- For developing vision of the new things for HTC this year and for the Holy Spirit's renewing for us individually, with courage to follow His leading.
- Those who are sick. We pray for those caring to have; strength, help, rest and an extra sense of the closeness of God. In particular Richard Perkins who is seriously ill in hospital and his wife Sue, at this difficult time.
- For those separated by distance, circumstances or relationship problems. Quoting Maria in Albania, "People may be far away, but GOD IS CLOSE!!"
- The needs of the Hellenic Red Cross who serve the community so well
- New premises for The Special Needs High School and Lykeio.
- Our neighbours to the North, Albania, that the funds and supplies will be wisely distributed and used for quick repair and rebuilding after the earthquake.

We give thanks for:-

- The success of the Christmas market and music and thank all those who worked so hard for this event.
- Families and great times together over Christmas and the New Year
- All The Lord has done in the past year, and all those who have committed to serving in any way.



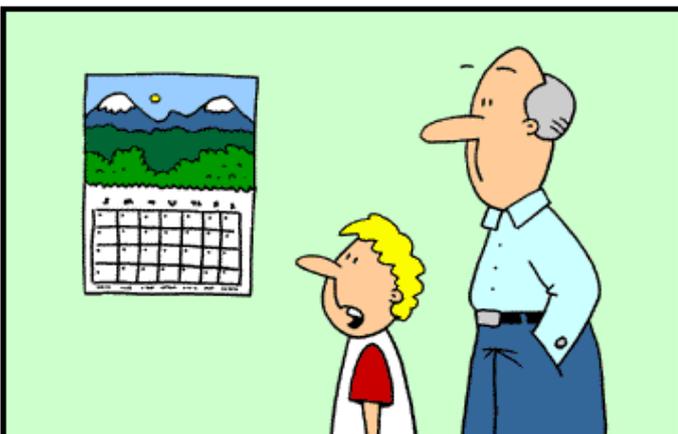
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! - *2 Corinthians 5:17*

Our service on Sunday 29th December ended with us singing 'Happy Birthday' to Pauline who celebrated her 70th birthday that day. Despite being her birthday Pauline continued her service at HTC by leading the morning service!

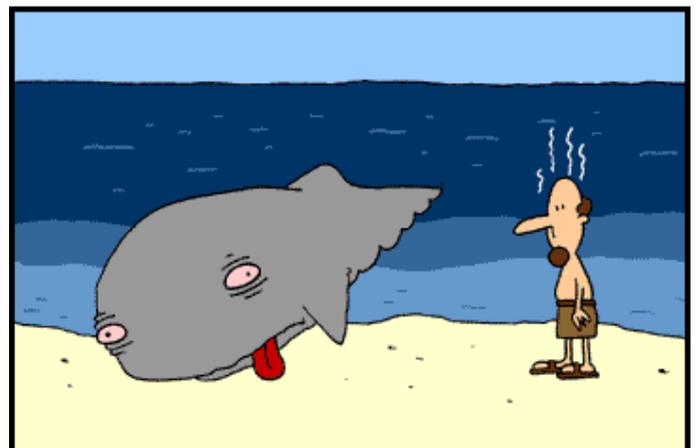
Thank you Pauline for all your service for the Lord at HTC and HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU



Cartoons (with thanks to Reverendfun.com)



(See Exodus 20:8) 01-18-1999
 I WAS HOPING TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY HOLY, BUT I CAN'T EVEN FIND IT ON THE CALENDAR



Thanks to Dave Andres (See Jonah 1-4) 01-27-1999
 JONAH REALIZED TWO THINGS THAT DAY ... YOU CAN'T ESCAPE GOD'S WILL AND THAT IF HE HAD SHOWERED LAST WEEK HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN THE WHALE FOR A WHILE LONGER



How we meet disappointment or misfortune with faith and cheerfulness

This is the first in a series of articles in which we are going to try and explore how we can approach some of the real challenges of “walking the talk” and living the Christian life. The subject we’re looking at in this issue is - How we meet disappointment or misfortune with faith and cheerfulness.

Someone I know very well, a very positive and capable person, once shared with me a very unnerving philosophy on life. The theory went like this. If you want something to happen - expect the opposite. Then you will never be disappointed. Not only that, pretend that you don’t really want it and then it will happen. BUT... as soon as you talk about it or decide you really want something - it goes! It’s one way of dealing with disappointment - expect the worse and you can only be pleased. But there is something not quite right here. Is this theory really saying that the universe is so stacked against us that we have to cheat it into good things happening.

It’s like that strange expression, “touch wood”. Somehow, if we say that we want something to happen then touching wood is going to keep the negative universe at bay. It’s a very strange superstition when you stop and think about it.

I think the Bible provides us with a very different perspective on how the universe works and how we are to deal with our hopes and aspirations and as a consequence, how we are to think on things when they don’t quite unfold as we would hope.

This perspective starts with our understanding of God. God is good. Amazingly so; merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Bible says so many times (Exodus 34:6, Psalm 103:8, Psalm 145:8).

We are also told that all things work for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purposes (Romans 8:28).

And another strand, that our Lord knows what’s going on. Psalm 139:16–17 (NRSV) says: Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed. How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

So we are assured that God is good; that all things have the potential to be good for us and that our lives are part of something that is unfolding that our Lord knows about from the beginning.

So what exactly is happening when we find ourselves disappointed or experiencing things that we would rather not be facing? I’d like to suggest a checklist for our prayer lives. This may help us to answer this question for ourselves with our Lord in the very varied situations we all find ourselves in.

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1. The first thing to do is to check that our lives and choices are, as Paul puts it in Romans 8:28, "according to His purposes". To do this, we can ask and wait, remembering always that "there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). We never have anything to fear from God's guidance - His judgement will always be to save us and nurture us. Fear of punishment for any misguided actions on our part has no place in this waiting... Jesus already has that covered. So, we can await his gentle prompting in our spirit through prayer and patience. It could be that as a result of this prayerful questioning of our own desires and motives with God, we see something which changes our perspective on the disappointment. We have our hopes changed. We've been desiring something that wasn't the best for our spiritual growth in Christ, and so something else is shown to us. In this instance, the feeling of disappointment leads to a positive self-questioning before God and it's resolution comes through a new and better direction.
2. It is, however, quite reasonable, having undertaken some genuine soul searching, to find that we are in a good place when it comes to our motives and desires. And yet still a situation disappoints us. So now we pray for others who are involved in the particular situation. Is it that there are motives and desires of others in the situation that are making things worse than they should be? Again, the answer lies in prayer; taking time to ask our Lord to show us what to pray for, as we pray for others who are involved. We are asking for discernment to pray in love for a change in heart that will move others closer to God's ways in the situation. It is never ours to judge others in their relationship with God - that is for God, but we can ask to be guided by the Holy Spirit to pray for the right desires and motives for others. Just as we have prayed for ourselves. It may be that, in prayer, some insight is granted by the Holy Spirit that might help another in the situation. We need to be very wise and cautious before we offer this. Maybe it is worth double checking with someone we can trust in confidence first. And we must remember that God shows no favouritism. The same grace that is offered to us is offered to others. The same lack of condemnation we enjoy, is enjoyed by others too.
3. It may be that when we have checked our own motives and prayed for others in the situation; we find that there is nothing that we can do to change what has happened and nothing that anyone else can do either. This is particularly difficult when suffering or loss is involved. We have asked. We have prayed. And still the situation has not changed. Where can we go from here? Well we can certainly keep praying - Jesus calls us to be persistent in prayer; hope is a powerful Christian virtue.

In addition to this, there are two particular perspectives that I find helpful in not allowing the disappointment to become overwhelming.

Firstly, to remember the bigger perspective that the purpose of this life is to grow in our capacity to love in preparation for our eternal life to come. Our true life is spiritual - hidden in Christ. And the fruit of the spirit grows in the challenges of life. If we want to grow in patience, then we need to spend some time with people who annoy us! If we want to learn to be more kind, we must open ourselves to the needs of others to see if we can be part of their solution. Maybe the situation is an opportunity for growth in our spiritual capacity. If so, we can be thankful for the presence of the Holy Spirit to teach and guide us in this growth.

Secondly, and more difficult I feel, suffering was part of the pattern of Jesus' life. Suffering, for and with others, was the most profound part of his journey. Jesus does his greatest work on the cross when he appears helpless and defeated, yet his love, his hope and his forgiveness in those moments are truly world-changing. It is with good reason that we pray on Good Friday,

*'Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,
to you be glory and praise for ever
As we behold your Son, enthroned on the cross,
stir up in us the fire of your love,
that we may be cleansed from all our sins,
and walk with you in newness of life
singing the praises of him who died
for us and for our salvation.'*

It may be that this situation is part of our own cross to bear - for God and for His Kingdom. We often struggle to understand why suffering must happen and yet in Jesus we see suffering turned into the salvation of the world. If this is where we get to, with all other avenues of prayer

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and reflection exhausted, then we have the support of our friend and saviour who knows what this is like. Accepting the cross in His name, sharing in his sufferings, knowing that He is Immanuel (God with us) is a path the saints and martyrs have walked for centuries. To do so with His Presence supporting us is a high calling indeed.

I'm sure there are many other ways and perspectives that we can share to encourage each other in facing life's disappointments and challenges. Please do share your insights and testimonies by email with me if you feel they would be of help and support to each other.



What's on at Holy Trinity Corfu

Thurs	2	17:00	Worship Group
Sun	5	10:30	Family Communion & Sunday School
Thurs	9	17:00	Worship Group
		18:00	Council Meeting
Fri	10	09:30	Prayer Meeting
		18:00	Communion at Messonghi Catholic Chapel
Sun	12	10:30	Family Communion
Mon	13	18:00	Home Group
Tues	14	10:00	Watercolour Class
Thurs	16	09:15	Pastoral Care Team Meeting
		10:30	Bible Study at HTC
		17:00	Worship Group
Fri	17	09:30	Prayer Meeting
Sun	19	10:30	Family Communion
Mon	20	18:00	Home Group
Tues	21	10:00	Watercolour Class
Thurs	23	17:00	Worship Group
Fri	24	09:30	Prayer Meeting
Sun	26	10:30	Family Communion
Mon	27	18:00	Home Group
Tues	28	10:00	Watercolour Class
Thurs	30	17:00	Worship Group
Fri	31	9:30	Prayer Meeting

We always welcome contributions to our publications; however, we will not publish any material which infringes copyright. When sending in items for inclusion please state your source and the name of the author.

We are happy to accept prayer requests for inclusion in Pulse or in the morning service. If you are requesting prayer for someone other than yourself please make sure you have their permission to be mentioned publicly.

*Please remember the submission **deadline for PULSE is 25th of each month**. Articles, news, information etc. received after this time may not be included and will be carried over to the next edition if appropriate. Thank you.*

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