

VIEW FROM THE HEIGHTS November 2021

*Dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love.
It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.
Colossians 3:12, 14 The Message*

Greetings,

From conversations at church to concerns shared in my local bookshop to newspaper articles, opinion is that people are less thoughtful or polite than they used to be. Solipsism and selfishness appear to have replaced kindness and courtesy.

Various reasons for this have been proposed. The frequently divisive content of social media platforms and 24 hour-news networks. The rancorous nature of current political discourse (in many countries). I might add our accustomisation to ease. Our parents and grandparents lived through world wars and challenging economies. They learned to cope with hardship and they learned to share the little they had. We (21st century Westerners) might not have been so blessed...

A recent article in The Guardian newspaper, attributes some of the blame for our fractiousness to Covid-19. It states that:

"The coronavirus has enhanced a link between "disgust sensitivity" and xenophobia, whereby a sense of disgust – triggered by disease, for instance – makes people find their own group more attractive and those outside it less so."

Too many reasons for our lack of neighbourliness. Too few attempts at healing.

The Archbishop of York has taken on this vital mission. Following the horrific murder of British MP, Sir David Amess, Stephen Cottrell spoke out **against intolerance** and **in support of love**.

His speech to the House of Lords included the following message.

Hate cannot win.

It may score many points.

It may land many punches.

But it can't win.

Love is always stronger. It's always more tenacious. Its patient endurance draws us together.

And by love, I don't just mean warm feelings of well-disposed goodwill, but that deeply committed determination to get up each morning and live what you believe in, put the needs of others before yourself, recognise our common humanity.

That's where the word kindness comes from, it is linked to the word kin, it means we belong to each other, we serve the common good, we know that our best interests are absolutely interwoven with the interests of others. And they lead to those things, those values, that vision which is worth living for.

Archbishop Cottrell concluded his speech by reminding his listeners that wearing one's faith on one's sleeve serves nothing and no one. But *"when you wear it in your heart, it shapes everything."*ⁱⁱ

May your hearts be clothed with faith. May your Holidays be graced by kindness and love.

Deepest blessings,
Brenda

ⁱ Dan Milmo, *"'Nastier than ever': have Covid lockdowns helped fuel online hate?"*,
The Guardian 10/19/21

ⁱⁱ Archbishop of York's tribute to Sir David Amess in the House of Lords. 10/18/21