



Minister's Jottings - October 2016

Strange how on a daily basis we get into routines. I have been noticing people first thing in the morning as I sit in my home study, computer screen in front of me and I behind the front window. I see the school children on their way to lessons, the new students at Ormiston exactly three minutes in front of their older siblings, the dog walkers, (invariably stopping to let their dogs urinate on our hedge), the cars leaving on the school run and the workers walking with the 'I'm in a hurry' home made coffee in a cardboard cup. On the go people!

I see the same people nearly every day, (just as well I put up a net curtain as I am sure the ones I am observing would not take kindly to being observed. Then there is the wonderful post lady, she is profoundly deaf, but I will if time allows go to the door and greet her, a somewhat protracted conversation, but the smile is evident that someone has bothered to communicate, not because she is deaf, but she is there in her ordered routine day in and day out.

Ah, but I do the same thing, get up, tea for Jo, then straight into the study to think and work.

The above raises questions: What is our routine, and how do we interact in other people's routine, and possible a challenge for us, as to how do we break out of our daily routines and be able to adapt, learn and be freed from the expected norm.

Let us first look at the daily routines, we need them, as the hours and minutes pass, there are things that have to be done. Shopping, interesting that some people I know go to the supermarket at the same time on the same day every week; meet the same people and probably buy the same items. Sameness is comforting to many, a sense of reliable normality, a stability that speaks of things secure in an increasingly insecure community and world.

There are I am sure some routines that are important to us, our jobs, breakfast, lunch and dinner, morning coffee, many things that are important to us, things we do that have become habits, rituals in some way, we feel lost if the routine time and place does not happen; I know that if I have not done something by a certain time I can feel out of sync.

But how do these routines stop us from experiencing a state of free time, a sense that we are able to do new things, at new times, things we have not attempted before?

If we do, and we like them, do we not convert the new experiences into a new routines? (Change once experienced and done more than once can become a 'Tradition- or routine.'

And then what about the interaction of others, or I could say, 'Our interaction on other peoples' routines. Do we dare to suggest we break into their time? Dare we suggest a new approach to something someone else does?

This jotting is not a criticism of our comfort routines, our norms that help us realise the structure to our daily lives, but a question about our faith lives, our openness to being changed through the power of the Holy Spirit, a Spirit that can fling locked doors wide open, a spirit that can tear apart what we think is normality, and replace it new horizons, scary ventures and our part in them, a faith that is confident to be able to say, 'Today is the Lord's day and anything is possible'.

We worry about the numbers on a Sunday, yet we still hold that routine, that ritual; and when the allotted time is over, we continue on with the next one. Surely, we have to be looking to break the routines of when church is, what it is and for whom it is. We need to be looking to live more spontaneous lives as a people of faith. The meaning of faith is uncertainty in our lives, a reliance that through faith we will cope with the unexpected, the unfamiliar, and the unknown.

I don't think that Christ knew he was going to the cross when he started out his calling to ministry, every day was challenge, an opportunity, I also don't think that he worried too much about the company he kept or who was paying the bill. He just got on with it in the hope that through his faith in God would carry him through. And it DID!

All the way to the cross and beyond.

So, are we Sunday routine people, or a people who will risk the uncomfortable for the sake of our faith lives and the lives on this earth of others? Let us not have our faith as part of our daily routine, morning readings, prayer, clean the church, go to worship, go home and sigh that it's done for another week; but that each moment is a changing moment when what we thought was planned can be re-planned, what we thought can be re-learned, and how we live can be re-ordered.

Blessings as we venture to places without boundaries, lives without restriction, and faith places without frontiers. I've seen the people on their way, spoken to the post lady, (she had a packet for me), and not, time for a coffee and off into the unknown. Come and join me..... invitation open seven days a week!

JON