

A few words from the Vicarage ...



What a difference we have seen recently in and around Ansdell & Fairhaven – and all due to a certain sporting event called simply ‘The Open’. The whole township was transformed as we welcomed the top golfers and their entourages from around the world along with the media circus and many thousands of spectators, anxious to get a closer look at their heroes. Did you do the ‘*spot my house*’ on those aerial shots on TV?

Mind you, I felt that the adulation being poured upon some of these sportsmen was quite disproportionate – indeed, in the case of Tiger Woods, it seemed that the more he received, the grumpier he became. Others were more deserving, however, and it was interesting to see how some of the new (*to me at least*) faces had taken on the demeanour of the ‘old masters’ in the game rather than follow in Tiger’s footsteps. Of course, the amounts of money involved also seem totally obscene and disproportionate, with the winner having been handed £900,000. It is nigh on impossible even to begin trying to justify such sums for playing a few rounds of golf – irrespective of the skills involved and the entertainment given. It is an ill divided world – and the gaps are growing ever wider. Other people have great skills which they employ day and daily without such rewards – yet they continue to do their best for those around them. They remain in the background and receive neither fame nor adulation; the television cameras and newspaper reporters don’t track their every movement, searching for stories.

I wonder how Jesus would have fared in this cauldron of a media-centric society. Would he have been at the forefront of the hype and frenzy – or would he be the one who quietly went about his daily routine – spreading his gospel quietly and without fuss?

Somehow, and sadly, I feel that he would have found it impossible to escape the attention of the story-seekers and equally difficult to find that 'quiet place' in which to sit and pray – away from the glare of publicity.

In many ways, we need to embrace and engage with these events whilst not selling out to them. We cannot ignore them, for they will roll on relentlessly without us – so we make contact with them at levels comfortable to us and we make use of them where we feel they may help. Otherwise we will be left floundering amongst the detritus to be found in their wake.

It is right that we are able to celebrate in the success of these events and to recognise their place in our lives – as they certainly give pleasure, albeit fleetingly, to countless numbers who attend or watch on television. We may also reflect upon the legacies they leave as it is hoped that many may be inspired to play tennis after Wimbledon; take up cycling after the *Tour de France*; take to the golf course after The Open; or any one of the many Olympic sports we are about to encounter.

We too have been inspired by another 'hero' whom we admire, love and respect – we have been inspired by Jesus as we seek to follow in his footsteps along the path of righteousness ... as we receive an everlasting legacy which is there for all mankind in every age – there is nothing transitory or short-lived about such an inheritance which is gifted freely and without partiality.

As we now looking forward to summer – perhaps a holiday or a visit to one or more of the Olympic events, I wish you all safe journeys and a time of peaceful recreation. Let the games begin!

God bless you all,

Your Vicar,

Fr D.