

RECTOR'S RAMBLINGS October 2024

With Michaelmas gone it is the traditional end of the harvest, which means the start of our Harvest Festivals (don't miss the Aynho Harvest Festival at St. Michael's, 11am on the 6th October!). I have always loved Harvest Festivals. Growing up they were one of three times in the year our family went to church (everyone goes at Christmas, and Remembrance). Harvest was when we went to give thanks for everything we had. Growing up on the farm I had a hands-on appreciation of nature. I have since discovered that comparatively it was not always a very sugar-coated view of the natural world. There was mud and muck and various other things that I learnt not to mention in polite society from an early age (anyone who knows what I mean about jackets for cade lambs will understand). I know more than a few people who have been upset or distressed when the image of nature they cherish, All things Bright and Beautiful, is marred by the less Disneyesque reality.

There are always challenges and difficulties, from blight, to bad weather (including incessant rain or endless drought), to the messiness seemingly inherent in life and death. It can seem that the world is a very fallen place; hard and heartless where nature is dog-eat-dog. However, I have never found that the difficulties and realities take away from the wonder in the world around us.

It is easy to become used to something, or become disillusioned by the challenges of life, but we must not forget how remarkable creation is. Amidst a universe of rather staid and lifeless rocks our planet teems with an abundance of life that runs, swims, flies, burrows and grows; all warmed and lit by a fire 93 million miles away that we dance around in an elliptical celestial waltz. Somehow it is easy to forget how wonderful it is that we live in a world where seeds grow into trees, where life reproduces itself, where bees dance, whales sing, and flowers regularly turn into fruit. The fact that miracles occur daily and with regularity do not make them any more miraculous.

At Harvest, once the work is done, we take stock of all that we have; and remember that - with our own work- everything that sustains us comes from creation, the world around us. In some places the Altar is piled high at Harvest with wheat and marrows (always marrows, I think they are grown just for Harvest Festivals). In other places preserved goods are gathered to be given to people who need them, to share the food the world provides and which we all equally need. Some areas do not pile up food but bring iron or coal to the Church as these things are the harvest of those communities, the things that sustain them. Whether it is for the food we eat, or our water, minerals and materials, or the wind and light now beginning to power our homes; we come together to give thanks for whatever it is we have, to remember the wonder of creation, and to thank God.

Whatever sustains you through this year, I pray that you will find it in joy and abundance.

God bless you all. Rev George Frost