

## **A Reflection from a St Mary's Churchwarden (Charles Wilson)**

The heat of summer is beginning to recede, and our Velux roof blind batteries have finally given up after excessive use over the recent balmy months. Time to retrieve the long ladder for the stairwell ascent, and doubtless a persuasive Mrs Wilson will ask me to get out onto the roof and clean the skylight into the bargain, drat it!

Last Sunday we couldn't find a priest to take our 10am Service. This was the first time in almost 12 months which is a great achievement by our church Administrator, and also testimony to the generosity of many clergy who have so faithfully served us, Sunday by Sunday. If I've said this before, I don't apologise. A 'vocation' is very clearly quite different from a 'job'. They have my utmost admiration and thanks.

Anyway, I offered to do the talk instead. Our lay reader had done more tasks than me the previous Sunday, so fair's fair. I had three passages of scripture to choose from. The first was the Old Testament account of King David's son being killed. That didn't grab me much, sad though it was for him. The second was a practical passage from the Apostle Paul on restraining our anger and forgiving others, and I thought it didn't need much exposition or explanation. So I focused my attention on the gospel for the day: a very powerful and significant passage where Jesus announces "I AM the bread of life" i.e. God = Life. Jesus said this just after a stunning miracle had fed 5,000 folk who were chasing him around the Galilean countryside. It must have been rather like a huge, free McDonald's drive-thru serving Filet-O-Fish only.

In the middle of my preparations for the talk, Julia and I went to North London to stay with a cousin overnight. I hadn't noticed that they have CCTV over their front door. We parked the motorbike outside the house, as usual. This was the big touring bike we took to Istanbul, and which carried us 3,000 miles around Europe this summer. Almost a good friend.

The following morning I went outside to load the bike. No bike! Some of you will know that sinking feeling when you realise you've been robbed. We told the police immediately. The offenders were visible on the CCTV film at 1.00 am, taking less than 3 minutes to break the steering lock, wire the ignition and make their escape. As they were 'moped-thieves' with helmets, identification is almost impossible and recovery very unlikely. So we loaded our biking clothes into plastic bags and came home by public transport. Feelings were raw.

After notifying the insurers, I sat down to review the Epistle for the following morning. Several exhortations now appeared to be somewhat more relevant that they had the day before, such as "Do not let the sun go down on your anger" ..."Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths" ... "Be kind and compassionate, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you". Ouch! Scripture is always relevant and challenging.

So I did my best.