

I sometimes think that being a child of the sixties helps when considering the sayings of Jesus. Not because we were all on wacky backy but because many of us wanted to live in love and peace with our fellow humans. Partly a legacy of that crazy war in Vietnam.

Jesus requires all Christians to Love God and Love their fellow man. He also asks us to Love our enemies. There are times when things that our enemies do to us are positive. As a fairly outspoken maverick type of curate you can possibly imagine that there were the occasional senior clergy who shook their heads in horror at the younger generation. One of my least loved Archdeacons and Bishops objected to me being interviewed for a post which I would have gladly filled. As a result I went to a different Diocese and eventually joined the prison service where I stayed for twenty six years. Then deep joy of deep joy I came to Balcombe. I don't believe that my life has been mapped out by a divine puppeteer but I do believe that God can change bad things into good. Or if you like that if we try to follow Gods will despite past failures good can come out of bad.

So how can we love our enemies when Jesus challenges us to bless them and our instincts are sometimes very different. When in Church or on other occasions I pronounce a formal blessing. That blessing is for all people present, equally and without prejudice or exception. My old English missal has blessings for all sorts of people and things. I recall a blessing for a motor carriage. I have happily blessed rooms in the presence of fearful infants to assure them that they are places where they can have a peaceful mind. Or that peace is stronger than the occasional fearful dream.

Blessing each other means overcoming negative and destructive thoughts and actions. I can recall a young prisoner who on adjudication for misdemeanors would say horrendously nasty things to the governor. We explored together how he could find some charity in his heart for a governor who was a good and caring man. The prisoner thought that the best option was to smile and see the governor as having a Mickey Mouse head. When asked by a very surprised governor why he was smiling the prisoner replied. “|The Chaplain says that you have a Mickey Mouse head governor.”

Not quite a blessing but a little improvement.

It is also good to bless God for the many benefits we have or have had in this life.

Yes a pint of Harvies can be a blessing,

Thanks for reading,

Desmond