

Friends

I hope that you will remember that our clocks go back this Saturday/early Sunday morning. Far more fun than the moving forward in the spring, as it gives us a whole extra hour in bed, should we wish to take it, or alternatively, an extra hour of time to potter in the morning before we must get ready for church.

When Mark and I were on honeymoon in Spain back in 1998, there wasn't the tech that we now have that does a lot of timing things for us. Everything went swimmingly until we visited the tiny little island of Tabarca off the Costa Blanca. It consists of a double row of houses leading to an open air taverna and is carpeted in semi-feral cats – an incredible number of them but quite friendly by and large. We knew that we had to get the last boat back because there was nowhere to stay on the island and although we were outdoors, Mark is extremely allergic to cats and we hadn't known until we arrived that there were umpteen more cats than people on the island.

Arriving at the quay in time for the last boat, we were dumbfounded to discover that there was no-one there and somewhat panicked we desperately tried to find someone who could tell us what was going on, given that the local's English and our Spanish were equally bad. In the end, we discovered that the clocks had gone back and we were alright because the boat was coming in an hour. Growing up as we had with "British Summer Time", it had not occurred to us that other countries might have their "summer times" too.

I wonder how often, in our knowledge of our own culture and faith, we miss the overlaps and opportunities to understand each other, by not thinking to ask the questions? Perhaps "Do you have something like ...?" would be a really good question. Paul in Athens, finding that they had an altar "to an unknown God" was able to point out that he had something like that in his faith, it was just that the

question “Who is the unknown God?” had been answered. In the event of not knowing what to do with your extra hour this weekend, perhaps you might say a prayer for all those who are so like us, but who we think of as different through culture, faith or anything else.

God bless, Vicci