

Friends

I was talking to our teenagers on Friday and I was reminded of the terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach when I first heard the phrase “lifelong learning”. It seems ridiculous now, but somehow I had imagined that there would come a point in my early twenties when I could stop studying and being examined in things and would just be the finished article. Of course, from the perspective of more than 5 decades of lifelong learning, I understand that it has to be, if for no other reason than that people keep inventing new ways to do things and new things to do. For example, I am reliably informed by those in the know, that with the right piece of software, I could get AI to write this for me – but where’s the fun in that?

Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus’ disciples learning and even Jesus himself is invited to think differently when he meets the Syro-Phoenician woman. Poor old Peter who so often jumps in with both feet is even told “Get thee behind me, Satan!” when he gets it wrong. We have to keep learning, being tested and developing. It is part of how we grow closer to God and more like Jesus.

On this Remembrance weekend, as we look around us at a world that has learned nothing from successive world wars, we may feel a sense of hopelessness. Many had believed that we were beyond traditional warfare, that we had somehow evolved beyond it. And yet not only has the war in Ukraine not yet ended, but they themselves are concerned that the West will now be so busy working through what is happening in Gaza, that we will stop helping Ukraine. It is hard to hold to our faith in the Prince of Peace when we are surrounded by stories of war. Yet we believe that if “life in all its fullness” is not being played out at this moment, still it is what God intends for us; it is what we were made for. All we can do is to continue to pray for peace and to give thanks for those who work for it, whether in the military or the diplomatic and political arenas. On this Remembrance Sunday, we remember both with gratitude to those who died and with determination to do what we can do to ensure it doesn’t happen again. Those feel empty words when the news is all of war, but perhaps through continuing to learn

to be more like Christ, to understand better what God is calling us to and to hear the Holy Spirit, we may become better Soldiers of Christ in so-doing speak peace into our generation.

God bless, Vicci