

From Fr Simon

Dear all

“2 Become 1” was one of the early Spice Girls hits, I wonder how many of you remember it!

2 Become 1 was also what happened in Golcar and Longwood a couple of years ago, when the parishes of St John and St Mark were officially recognised as a United Benefice. Let me tell you a few things about this place.

Our Benefice of Golcar St John the Evangelist and Longwood St Mark the Evangelist (its full official name) has a population of 16,710. All these people are in 10,270 households and are 58% Christian (according to the 2011 census). The Benefice covers 4.1 square miles, and has two parish churches, but many other churches as well: Parkwood and Providence Methodists, Scapegoat Hill and Golcar Baptists, and probably more. We have 7 schools (can you name them all?) one of which is a church school. I don't know how many buildings of other faiths we have – maybe you do. We encompass Wellhouse, Nettleton Hill, Leymoor, Parkwood, Scapegoat Hill, Bolster Moor, Slack, Mount, Dodlee, Clough Head, Golcar and Longwood; as well as parts of Milnsbridge, Salendine Nook, Quarmby, and Paddock.

We have three reservoirs, one golf course, two (maybe three) museums, a garden centre, a mechanics institute, a library, several football and cricket clubs, a hotel, a retreat house, a folly tower and an amphitheatre. We are approximately bounded by the M62 to the North and the River Colne to the South.

The Colne Valley Circular and Kirklees Way both pass through. We are both rural and urban with many shops, businesses, care homes, pubs, take-aways, restaurants, parks, woods, medical practices, farms. A Roman road passes through the Benefice, and there was a Roman fort here.

With all these riches and variety, steeped in history yet thriving in 2021, it is a wonderful place to live and minister.

But of course, a place is nothing without its people. This area is full of life and character. Real-life and real-characters. And I continue to be blessed by so much support, understanding, generosity, friendliness, kindness, encouragement and prayerful love. For which I am humbly thankful.

God Bless

Notices

Our Lent Book is called, Entertaining Saints, Tales from St George's Crypt by Roger Quick. It's an excellent little book, easy to read, packed full of real-life stories, gentle humour, humanity and raw Christianity.

It costs about £10, or if you want to borrow a copy ask Fr Simon.

We are intending to return to worshipping in our churches from Easter Sunday. The services will continue to be live-streamed, but we will still be wearing masks and distancing.

Our bible study course finished its 8 weeks. We have decided to continue once a month and to study the readings for Sundays. Our next one is 19th April at 7.30pm via Zoom. Meeting ID: 821 7505 2779

The PCCs have been thinking about the following questions in relation to our time of pandemic and lockdown. We'd love to hear your answers too. Can you send them to Sylvia if you're from St John's / Janet W if you're from St Mark's.

1. What have we lost that we need to regain?
2. What have we lost that needs to stay lost?
3. What have we gained that we need to keep and build upon?
4. What have we gained during the emergency that we now need to lose for the future?

Diary

- Palm Sunday 28th March (and the clocks go forward)
- There will be live-streamed services at 6pm Holy Monday to Maundy Thursday.
- Good Friday 2nd April. Live-streamed service at 2pm.
- Easter Sunday 4th April, services back in our churches (alleluia!)
- Monday 19th April, 7.30pm bible study via Zoom

Looking ahead:

- Sunday 9th May, Golcar APCM following the service
- Sunday 30th May, Longwood APCM following the service