



Outlook

**The magazine of
St Mark's Church
Longwood**



From Fr Simon: Is God forgiving or judgemental?

You might have seen a TV police drama where two officers interrogate a suspect. One of the officers takes the hard line. He (or she) doesn't take no for an answer and reacts with disbelief at every answer the suspect gives. The other officer is nice, they try to make friends and build empathy, the suspect thinks this officer is on their side. This is the proverbial "Good cop / bad cop" routine. I don't know if the police do this in practice, but we see it on telly quite a lot.

Sometimes our view of God is like this. We think that God is judgemental; trying to catch us out and coming to tell us how bad we are. At the same time, we think that God is forgiving and merciful, and coming to be nice to us and to help. It can be hard to know which one to believe.

We can even split God up and imagine that God the Father is the judgemental part of God, whereas God the Son (Jesus) is the nice forgiving God. God the Holy Spirit, in our minds, can be either one or the other.

So, is God forgiving or judgemental?

The short answer is both. God forgives and God judges: God the Father is both, God the Son is both and God the Holy Spirit is both.

The trouble is that we have our own view of what it means to judge. Maybe we imagine a courtroom where someone is found guilty, they are condemned by the people, they are condemned in the press, they are sent to prison by the judge, for a long time. This judging tends to be about shame and punishment.

When God judges, he does it wanting to make things good. Someone is judged so that they might see the error of their ways, so that they might learn and grow, so that they might feel remorse and seek forgiveness. With God's judgement a person wants to live a better life, and to put right the things that had hurt and damaged others.

If our penal system worked perfectly, then people would be released from prison transformed and renewed. They would want to make amends for their

wrongs, to repair damage. And if we were a perfect people, we would welcome that. And maybe we could even forgive.

So God judges, but only so that we can repent and find forgiveness. When we confess and say sorry, God wipes away our bad things, and we are free.

In church we say sorry (repent of our sins) every Sunday. But there can be some things, some badness in our lives, of which we are unaware, or which we have buried deep. God's judgement stirs us up, so that those things which are hidden within us are brought to the light and can be dealt with and forgiven. This can be a difficult and painful process, because we would rather keep those things hidden. But God knows that we would be freer if they were dealt with. His judgement reveals the badness so that we can be healed, forgiven and set free.

God judges because he is forgiving and loving.

God Judges and forgives because he loves you and wants you to be restored to life.

Remember that God sent his Son into the world to save you, not to condemn.

God Bless



This month's joke:
Q. Why did the Easter Bunny have on a hat?
A. Because he was having a bad hare day!

Family Games Evening

On Friday 6th May we have our monthly **family games evening** in the Parish Centre.

We start at 6pm with a drink and snacks.
There will be a selection of games to play (and some experts to remind us of the rules).

We finish around 7.30pm.

All Welcome.



Platinum Jubilee Street Party

Do join us on Sunday 5th June from 12 noon til 4pm
God save the Queen!

Bouncy Castle

Face painting

Golcar

Craft Stalls

Brass

BBQ

Band



Tombola

Bell Ringing

Fancy Dress

(judged at 1.30pm)

Churchyard trail

Hot and cold drinks

Proceedings begin with an
outside service 10.30am

DIARY

Sunday 1st May

- 9.30am Holy Communion with music, and groups for children. St John's Golcar
- 11am Sung Eucharist. St Mark's Longwood

Friday 6th May. Family Games Evening. 6pm Longwood Parish Centre HD3 4UL

Sunday 8th May

- 8am Holy Communion in traditional language. St John's Golcar
- 9.30am Holy Communion with music, and groups for children. St John's Golcar
- 11am Family Eucharist, with the baptism of Ava. St Mark's Longwood

Saturday 14th May Golcar Lily Day see posters and facebook for more information.

Sunday 15th May

- 9.30am Thanksgiving service (non-Eucharistic). St John's Golcar
- 11am Sung Eucharist. St Mark's Longwood

Sunday 22nd May

- 9.30am Holy Communion with music, and groups for children. Followed by the Annual Meeting. St John's Golcar
- 11am Sung Eucharist. St Mark's Longwood

Thursday 26th May The Ascension. Details of services will be announced.

Sunday 29th May

- 9.30am All Age Service. St John's Golcar. An interactive service for people of all ages.
- 11am Sung Eucharist. St Mark's Longwood

Sunday 5th June Platinum Jubilee Street party, St Mark's Longwood

LOOKING AHEAD

Saturday 17th September Heritage Open Day, stalls, activities and tower abseil
In St Mark's Churchyard (indoors for bad weather)

Please send magazine contributions to the vicar, or contact him if you would like to sponsor or advertise in this magazine: revscrook@gmail.com

Comedian Frank Skinner on atheists:

I have friends who are atheists. There's this mate of mine. He says, 'It's such rubbish. Come back to my flat and I'll make a cup of tea and we'll talk the whole thing through.'
So I go back with him and he puts the kettle on.
'The thing is, Frank, the universe – it just happened. A big bang, an accident, no one made it happen. There's no great designer, no thought went into it or planning, it just happened – do you get it? ... Anyway, that cup of tea won't make itself.'
I said, 'Why not?'



**For Weddings,
Baptisms, Funerals or
any other enquiry**

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Sunday services are at 11am