

Thoughts on life and faith

September 2018

Since my ordination as 3 years ago I have spent a lot of time with bereaved families. In the last year or so I have also accompanied my parents as my dad slowly declined and sadly died. I have at times found it a real challenge to see where God is in this suffering and loss.

And most gods aren't! In our culture, in many faiths and even in some expressions of Christianity the gods are only present in success. Illness is a malfunction to be overcome and death is the ultimate failure! However the Christian faith has at its focus a God who suffers and even dies. And ultimately death is not the end of the story. Frailty is not failure!

We are made in the image of God even in our illnesses, frailty and sufferings. It's so hard to believe this sometimes but God is good and I have found he has provided me with insights into his love for us.

An example is that each morning at our little morning prayer service we pray a lovely little prayer:

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and forever. Amen

It was hard to pray this prayer on the morning of my dad's funeral – to recognise the gift of that particular day. But it was there. In the coming together of friends and family, in memories shared, in the beauty of the flowers, in the kindnesses of people, in the dignity of the Funeral Directors and staff at the crematorium, in the bitter-sweetness of tears shed and laughter shared. God was there. Alive.

A short Morning Prayer service is held at St Andrew's Church in Alresford each morning at 9.00am (Thursday is a service of Holy Communion) and each Wednesday at 9.00am at St Mary's Church in Thorrington. It would be lovely to start holding regular service at St Anne and St Laurence Church Elmstead. Please let me know if you would like to join me.

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