



St Cross Newsletter February 2024

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The Vicar writes...

Last Friday on my rest day Angela and I took a trip out to the Peak District. It seems so long since we last visited the Derbyshire Dales. It really is a jewel of the crown, right here on our doorstep. We parked in Bakewell and walked up to the Monsal Trail, a recreational track for hikers and cyclists alike along the route of the old Midland railway that took trains from Manchester Central Station down to London via Derby. It was a pleasant three-mile walk finishing back in Bakewell in time for lunch. Afterwards, once some retail therapy had been experienced including the acquisition of a sumptuous Bakewell Tart, we headed home. Our journey home involved a brief stop at Monsal Head where there is a splendid view over Monsal Dale and its magnificent viaduct that once carried trains steaming through the valley.

One can lament the changes. It's true that when this railway line was originally planned there was huge opposition to the desecration of the landscape necessary for this line to be built. It must have cost an extraordinary amount of money to build this with the number of tunnels, cuttings and embankments needed to get the line through the valley. Now there is no longer the sound of steam or diesel but the sound of cycle bells and bird song. The

Book Review

Tuesdays with Morrie Mitch Alborn

The reason I've chosen this book as a recommended read is that it left a big impression on me and is one of the few books that I willingly pick up and read again despite the fact that it always has me in tears at some point! I don't usually read books more than once as there is so much out there I want to read and time is flying by. This book, however, is definitely worthy of any number of re-reads!

It is a true story of a university professor (Morrie) reuniting with an old student (Mitch) after a viral interview in which Morrie talked about having ALS (a progressive disease). Mitch remembers fondly the idealistic lessons his sociology professor had taught him years ago and although he said he would keep in touch, he didn't. Now, however, he feels the need to reunite with his old professor. He is initially apprehensive to meet Morrie again as he hasn't seen him for over fifteen years and has since become work-orientated and productivity-driven without realising he has been doing so.

They do meet and this book manages to share many of Morrie's life lessons with Mitch and us too, during the times that they meet every Tuesday during the last months of the older man's life. The book is divided into chapters both in the present and with flashbacks to university days. Many of the topics discussed remind me of faith issues and our mentors in life. One of the things that struck a chord with me was the question that Morrie asked his students, "Why are we embarrassed by silence?" This is so relevant to us in meditation and prayer as Christians, too.

Many topics are discussed between

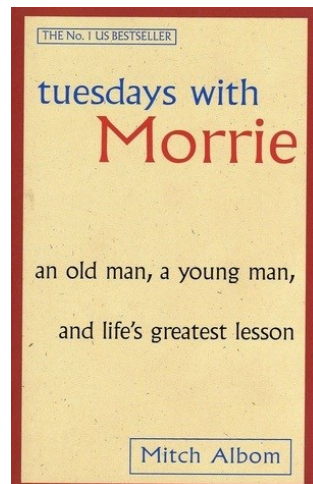
them such as the world, feeling sorry for yourself, regrets, death, family, emotions, fear of ageing, money, love going on, marriage, culture and forgiveness. And, of course there is the burning question as to whether we are leading a meaningful life.

Morrie's eventual death clearly hits the author very hard, though so many lessons are learnt through their powerful bonding, that you cannot but feel empowered by it all. Death comes to us all and Morrie himself says, "Death ends a life, not a relationship". Again, I draw parallels to our Christian journeys with Christ's death. As Mitch says, "We all need teachers in our lives. And mine (Morrie) was sitting in front of me". Morrie's message is that although life is a tension of opposites, "Love wins. Love always wins".

I am willing to lend you my copy of this book but it is one I shall insist on having back!

I wish you meaningful reading,

*Hil
(Reader at St Cross)*



walk along this track bed and down to the River Wye, then continuing up to Chee Dale with its towering limestone cliffs and stepping stones in the river, makes a truly great day out. I resolve to go back in the not-too-distant future.

At Monsal Head, as I looked over the landscape and reflected on the demise of the railway, as with so many other of Doctor Beeching's cuts we can romanticise and think if only these railways have been kept. The truth of the matter is that steam engines produced so much pollution and were expensive to maintain. Passenger numbers had dwindled so much that it was not economic to keep the lines open. Most people had fallen in love with their cars and the convenience and flexibility that they offer.

It's like many things in life. I recall my mother taking the decision to sell the family corner shop because she could see what was happening with the gradual increase of supermarkets. And now many of us may feel saddened over the state of the High Street but it seems that online shopping, which really took off during COVID in 2020, has become the preferred option for us. Indeed, sometimes we have no choice but to shop that way.

I wonder what the future holds for the Church? The Church of England faces a huge challenge in the next decade. In my post of Rural Dean and seeing a bit more of a 'helicopter view', so to speak, it really does have to consider whether the parish system is sustainable. If there are fewer ministers and smaller congregations, is it really possible to keep all the churches and cathedrals going that currently exist, in the current way of working? If the British people, indeed the western world, no longer see the Church as a way to find faith in God then perhaps there will be some lamenting in the future. There will always be a Church, I'm certain of that, but on what scale and size remains to be seen. In the meantime we are called to be faithful and trust in the one who calls and who is completely trustworthy (1 Thessalonians 5.24), and remember

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT OUR PRIESTS

1. They love God and you a lot. (Be mindful.)
2. They are painfully limited human beings. (Be realistic.)
3. They probably have a pretty low view of their "performance". (Be kind.)
4. They wish they were a better preacher. (Be awake.)
5. They really do want God's best for you and your family. (Be open-hearted.)
6. Their work knows no time or locational boundaries. (Be patient.)
7. They hear much more negative information than positive. (Be encouraging.)
8. They have chosen a vocation in which few remain. (Be praying.)
9. They have chosen a highly leadership-intensive call. (Be lead-able.)
10. They need help. (Be available.)
11. Their God-given vision is bigger than themselves and the church. (Be faith-filled.)
12. They want to personally meet all the needs, but know they can't. (Be understanding.)
13. They are going to say some dumb things every now and then. (Be forgiving.)
14. They are greatly encouraged by your faithfulness. (Be there.)
15. They are passionate for God's Word to be made practical to you. (Be hungry.)
16. They long for church to be your spiritual oasis. (Be loving.)
17. They dream for your and your family's spiritual health. (Be receptive.)
18. They need to hear that you pray for them. (Be interceding.)
19. They are just regular people. (Be real.)

Pray for our priests.



(Posted on Facebook by a clergy friend of the Editor.)

Giving a child official identity improves their whole outlook on life.

There is so much more to learn about all that is done for children in their care.

Please visit www.toybox.org.uk

Suggested TARGET FOR ST CROSS DURING LENT
to raise £256 which will provide 8 children with a Birth Certificate.

I hope we will look favourably on this valuable charity and respond generously.

Please ask me if you would like any more information.

Thank you. Mary

Date for your Diary

COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 9 March
10am-12 noon (tbc)
in the Parish Room
in aid of
TOYBOX

More details later

too, the words of Jesus, 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.' (Matthew 24.35)

Yours, in Christ
Paul

Monsal Dale and the Viaduct from Monsal Head – late in the afternoon.



Diary for February

Mondays

2-4pm Monday Together Activities, chat and refreshments.
All welcome

Tuesday 13th

7.30pm Lectio Divina (on Zoom)

Ash Wednesday 14th

10am Said Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

Thursday 15th

2-4pm Mothers' Union - AGM

Saturday 17th

10am-12 noon Coffee Morning in the Vicarage for Church Funds

Occasional Offices in February

Funerals

11 January

Terence Moore

17 January

Tony Williamson





TOYBOX

Changing the world
for street children

LENT APPEAL

"All I want is a name"

Supporting **TOYBOX** - changing the world for Street Children.

Toybox is a small British Christian Charity based in Milton Keynes, working in Bolivia, Kenya, India and Nepal, devoted to helping vulnerable children and ending the global injustice of children living and working on the streets.

Begun in 2011, it has helped approximately 193,475 children. The UN estimates there are hundreds of millions of street children, invisible to the world without rights or protection.

These children need a birth certificate so the key focus of Toybox is **Birth Registration**.

They believe every child has

*the right to health care

*the right to nutrition

*the right to safety and shelter

*right to identity

*the right to education

*the right to a childhood

*the right to knowledge

*the right to a future.

Many disabled children end up on the streets due to stigma and rejection from their family who cannot provide for their



needs. Toybox includes these children in their programme.

Some children have been chased by violence, disasters or the need to earn a living on the streets.

They are enticed by gangs offering friendship and financial gain and so fall prey to the most unspeakable

exploitation and abuse.

Locally led solutions, working where the need is greatest, have the most impact, add legitimacy and have the greatest long-term effectiveness. Evidence from their programmes helps Toybox to influence policy makers, so they work with governments and parliamentarians as well as speak to children's clubs, telling stories of the children they have helped.

This year Toybox has highlighted the plight of approximately 700,000 children in Guatemala.

They have no identity and are simply known as XXX children. Nobody cares or takes responsibility for them.

We can turn their lives around.

£32 helps to register a child and give each child their dignity and a future.

XXX children cannot see a doctor, are not allowed to learn or pass exams, to get a job and earn an income, or even get married.

