
Thoughts From The Vicarage

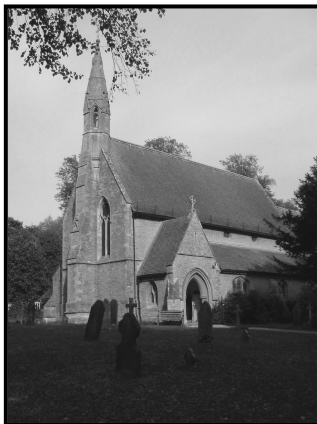
I'm aware as I sit at my computer that I probably ought to be composing something more seasonal for the magazine, but it is only early October

and the last of the harvest festival services have just been celebrated and, in spite of the fact that Sainsbury's and the other big supermarkets are offering me Christmas crackers and cognac-laced Christmas puddings, not to mention Christmas stockings for my pets, I can't, at this moment, enter into that celebration.

To do so early in October would be like accidentally turning over a couple of pages of a good novel – there is so much in between harvest and Christmas still to enjoy.

The reflections that have been occupying me most recently concern building stronger links with the community as a whole and putting down roots which are deeper and firmer. It takes a long time to get to know people and to earn their trust. One of the ways that this happens for a parish priest is through the various offices that she or he is called upon to carry out in the community. These offices include marriages, baptisms and funerals, those very personal moments when a minister is invited to share in a

family's joy or sorrow. I have been called upon to share those moments many times since taking up my office here nineteen months ago.



The form that they take and the events that they celebrate don't on the surface appear to be connected, but at a deeper life-level they are inseparable. We are all on a great journey from birth to death and the Church has always played a prominent part in those moments in people's lives.

The longer a minister remains within a community the better and stronger the links that are formed – I may work with a young couple as they plan their wedding day and a year later I may be called upon to baptise their first child and perhaps at some point or other I will be called to support the family through the grief as they prepare to bury a much-loved grandmother or grandfather. They are occasions for getting to know the wider-family members and it is always a great privilege to be allowed to enter into the lives and homes of families at such moments in their personal journeys.

Wendy Callan

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