

What do we treasure

In the name of God,
Father, Son and Holy
Spirit. Amen

I wonder if you read or heard the news item recently where a golf player was 2 shots up in a tournament and stood to win a huge amount of money, when he was told his wife had gone into labour for their first child. He walked off the golf course losing the chance of winning the prize in order to be with his wife. Impressive! Jesus said: "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also." That's one of my favourite sayings of Jesus – so obvious and so true and yet so easily ignored. August for most of us is a quieter time of the year with a chance to take time out; to chill out; and hopefully get life more in perspective and take the wider view. What do we treasure in life? If our life was analysed by experts what would they determine as our priorities? Have we allowed the incidentals to take over and become more important than what we really see as our heart's desire?

Now I'm sure you are all computer experts but I claim no such competence. So once when my computer was feeling out of sorts I got increasingly frustrated. It became very sluggish and would then just freeze. So being at a loss myself I called in a man who does who came to my rescue. He gave the patient a thorough examination, putting various things right and putting me right on various things as he did. He diagnosed one of the main problems as being that the computer needed defragmenting – which sounded rather uncomfortable. Evidently the more it is used and acquires more and more information the more files build up which need sorting out so it takes longer and longer to find them. Rather like the cartoon in my study which proclaims this office uses the Biblical filing system – 'seek and ye shall find!' My helper declared I should defragment my computer once a week and he kindly set it up to remind me. Once the defragmenting programme is started you can have its progress diagrammatically presented on screen. What starts out as lots of lots of little multi-coloured squares all mixed up on the

screen becomes progressively lined up colour coded and in sequence as it tidies up the memory transferring the gaps to free space at the end. Once the process is complete the computer springs to life all bright eyed and bushy tailed focussing on the task in hand.

Well it seems to me, especially as I get older, that I could do with a defragmenter in my brain! It's so easy for life to become broken down into separate fragments which each compete for my attention and somehow the more I take in the more difficult it is to see the whole picture. And I believe that we live in a society which, wittingly or unwittingly, has increased the fragmentation of our lives. Technology can fragment community with each member of the family watching their own TV or plugged into their own i player; people talking into their mobile whilst ignoring the person next to them or broadcasting to the whole restaurant or railway carriage; people spending so long on their computers making the world of virtual reality more real than actual reality.

But Jesus said: "Where your treasure is there will your heart be

also." He also said; "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the Kingdom." In our increasingly fragmented society it is God's kingdom which can defragment our lives to bring us back into the unity and harmony which is his eternal purpose and the true treasure to set our hearts on. The more we fragment the more we yearn for wholeness and thirst for the eternal dimension to life – for mystery – something more than disconnected pockets which are on offer in our secular society but which offer no continuity or community.

Jesus continually surprises us – or he should do. He does not impose anything on us but leaves us to find the truth for ourselves. When the lawyer asked: 'who is my neighbour?' he told the Parable of the Good Samaritan and then asked 'who do you think was neighbour to the man who fell among thieves? When the woman caught in adultery was brought before him and they asked him for his judgement he answered 'let the one without sin cast the first stone', and what did he do then? He bent down and scribbled in the sand giving them all time to think about

it. One by one they walk away – significantly starting with the eldest.

August is a time for scribbling in the sand – for leaving space and letting our whole being; body, mind and spirit; rediscover and reconnect with our treasure, which is God's Kingdom. What is really important to us in life and is that truly reflected in our priorities, or have we allowed one of the fragments of our life to usurp the place of our real treasure? The word 'holiday' of course is derived from 'Holy Day'. When my computer doctor told me I should defragment it once a week I thought of the Sabbath. Keeping the Sabbath Day holy is one of the maker's instructions for getting the best out of his creation. God knows we only work properly and efficiently as human beings when our lives are not fragmented, but whole, with body, mind and spirit in unity and harmony. So don't forget to set your default button to defragment your life each Holy Day to bring it back into unity and harmony as you rediscover and reconnect with our true treasure of God's Kingdom so we set our hearts hastening the time when that becomes reality on earth as in Heaven. Amen

Peter Lee

