

Climate Change

Following the EU referendum, we find ourselves in a strange place. Of those who voted, just over half are rejoicing and just under half are mourning. It is a time of uncertainty, not just for our nation but for all sorts of people, including people we know and love. In the news and on social media, there is all sorts of nasty stuff going around and this saddens me but I can also understand that there are high emotions around.



I am quite happy to admit that I voted remain and on the Saturday after the vote I was inspired to write these words as a status post on Facebook, just to help people understand what I was feeling like.....

“So a new day dawns... and yesterday's news wasn't just some bad dream. A new and uncertain future lies ahead and I will be committed to being part of that future even though it's not what I voted for. BUT... at the moment I'm grieving and it hurts and as I write this I feel the tears welling up. When I lost my dad, I grieved and then I healed but in between I tried to deny it, I was angry, I tried bargaining (if only I had done....), I cried and eventually acceptance came. Healthy grieving needs all these things to happen. So, please bear with me, and all those who feel like this today. If you voted leave, please recognise our hurt, let us grieve so that in time we can join you on this new journey for our nation. In the days to come, we might say things we wouldn't normally say and act out of character but please forgive us just as you would a friend who's just lost a loved one. I will bounce back but it won't be today or even tomorrow.”

It is an emotional time for many and I believe that if we are to find a good future for our country, we need to spend some time focussing on healing. Those grieving need to have space to do so, those rejoicing need to be allowed to do just that – but the future that we need to keep our eyes fixed on is one where we can be reunited. This is not going to be easy – neither campaign was particularly honourable – and some unpleasant stuff on both sides, so there is work to be done by us all.

At Diocesan Synod on the day before the vote, Bishop David spoke about how the Church had a role to play after the referendum in setting a good climate in which the people of our nation can reunite and work together whatever the outcome might be. But what kind of climate is this?

Well, I think one of the readings for the Sunday after the vote gives us the answer. Paul in his letter to the Galatians was wanting those new Christians to understand what living like Jesus was all about. He says that it's all about loving your neighbour, that it's about not trying to destroy each other, it's about living in a way that does not damage ourselves or our relationships. And so Paul goes on to say, these are the qualities you need to develop as Christians, to be a people who are able to love their neighbours: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.



He describes these as the fruits of the Spirit, the good things that Holy Spirit brings to the fore in our lives so that we can live in a Christlike way. I would like to encourage you to have a think about which one of these you need more of in your life so that we can all play a part

together in creating a climate in our communities and country where there can be healing and reconciliation. As you think about the fruit that you would like more of, ask God's Spirit to help it grow and flourish in you.

At the same time, you might like to also use a prayer published by the Church of England after the referendum:

**Eternal God, Light of the nations,
in Christ you make all things new:
guide our nation in the coming days
through the inspiration of your Spirit,
that understanding may put an end
to discord and all bitterness.
Give us grace to rebuild bonds of trust
that together we may work
for the dignity and flourishing of all;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**