

Thoughts for Ash Wednesday:-

As the People of God and His witnesses in the world, it is good occasionally to take stock!

The following things come to mind:-

The world at the present moment in time is seemingly in a state of chaos!

The battle between Israel and the terrorist group Hamas continues in spite of the temporary 'cease fire'. As ever the innocent are the ones who suffer! There is no "meeting of minds" as to a way forward.

It appears that modern day imperialism / colonialism will have the upper hand in deciding the future of Ukraine. As ever 'might is right'!

In the U.S.A. there are widening divisions in politics and daily life between left and right.

The European Union is under pressure with a resurgence of nationalism, and some of the constituent nations are taking things into their own hands. Law enforcement is in danger of becoming more authoritarian due to perceived threats from terrorism.

Many of the "traditional" churches are divided over same sex marriage and other issues of sexuality.

While much good work is done by different groups like "Street Pastors" and "Food banks" there is no clear moral lead given by a broken and disorganised leadership in the national 'Church of England'. Open, honest and straightforward talking may lead to division and problems, but it would have avoided what appears to be dishonesty in some statements and discussions.

When did you last hear a sermon / address on "Holiness"?

Alongside the usual Ash Wednesday reading from the Book of Joel chapter 2, verses 15 - 17 please read and meditate on **Jeremiah chapter 6, verses 16 - 19**. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."* (Matthew chapter 7, verses 13 - 14).

This Lent please pray for your Church Elders / Ministers / Pastors, that they may give honest, wise and Godly leadership in difficult circumstances. For open and honest discussions of hard differences that the Mind of the Lord may be known in His Church.

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord of Hosts."

Zechariah chapter 4, verse 6.

*"Jesus Bids Us Shine With A Pure, Clear Light,
Like A Little Candle Burning In The Night.
In This World Of Darkness Jesus bids Us Shine
You In Your Small Corner, And I In Mine."*

Children's' hymn by Susan Bogert Warner (1819-1885)