

Cait Writes



Today, I met with the other clergy members of our deanery on Zoom.

There was much talk about spiritual and emotional exhaustion among both clergy and the communities that they serve. I have heard many people talk about feeling like they are stuck in the 1993 Bill Murray film 'Groundhog Day'.

It occurred to me that with all the good intent in the world, clergy may be fuelling this exhaustion rather than helping to expel it. Clergy tend, as a species, to have a hundred half-baked ideas before breakfast. Often, we share these with people in the hope that it might inspire them, and ideas might build upon one another to create a reality, often nothing like the original idea but something unique to the context and the people which they serve. This is exciting but when the people that you serve feel low and as though they are stuck on a giant hamster wheel to nowhere, I am sure the vicar's ideas and ideals begin to wear thin.

All too often people drop away from church because they feel that what the church asks of them is too much and they either feel tremendous guilt or resentment because it feels like they are the only ones acting on ideas and pleas for help.

Let me remind you of the story of the widow's mite. Jesus sees what the widow has to offer, what others see is of no consequence. Jesus knows how much the coins mean to the woman, he doesn't ask us to give beyond our capabilities and in this world of uncertainty and upheaval, what is one person's limit may not appear to match that of another. That is not to say that Jesus doesn't see what we each offer and we must remember that he values all that we give.

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So, if the vicar asks if you are interested in being involved in... , working on... , what you think about... , it doesn't mean that she expects you to singlehandedly head up the entire project. Let's be honest about our capabilities in this Groundhog Day era.

She will not be offended if you tell her you like the idea but can offer a particular amount of time and energy and no more, or you may have to give up something else in order to develop this. Equally, if you feel like you need a project to break the monotony, do give her a shout!

Remember - a hundred half-baked ideas before breakfast - one of those ideas could be God's way of connecting you to a new part of the community, a new initiative in the diocese, an untapped resource or skill you never knew you had.

In summary, be gentle with yourselves. It is not laziness or weakness to feel lethargic at this time of year. Many of God's other creatures sleep or rest more in these months, perhaps we should take their lead.

Being enough and giving enough is good enough. We seem to live in a world where enough is not enough and where we have to strive for greater than enough.

Let us remember that we are called to be 'like' Jesus but not to 'be' Jesus. He has done all the hardest work for us, in dying on the cross, everything else is extra but could never be more than what he has already done. Therefore, he gives us permission to be what we can be and offer what we can offer.

So here is a crazy idea from your vicar - take time to REST. God bless and stay safe.

Cait