

A few words from the Vicar

"Do not judge, so that you may not be judged." (Matthew 7:1)

This is an age of instant news and instant comment.

In 1805 it took weeks for news of the British victory at Trafalgar to reach Napoleon, who was with the French army in Bavaria at the time.



Fast forward to today and we have the internet and 24/7 news channels that report and seek to explain events (and apportion blame) almost as soon as they happen. And from almost anywhere in the world at that! In addition, if we can be bothered with it, there's the running commentary we have available to us via blogs and Twitter.

Then, in stark contrast to spontaneity and glamour of the internet, when writing for the Church Magazine we have the rather lengthy lead time between the copy deadline and publication date.

Harold Wilson once said, "A week is a long time in politics." Well three weeks is even longer when you're trying to write something contemporary and relevant for the Church Magazine!

As I write, it doesn't seem so long ago that all the news media were awash with details about the lengths that some wealthy people (and one show biz personality in particular) go to minimise their tax liability. A couple of weeks later and all of that is now rather passé!

The media circus has moved on and I've missed the moment to say something truly meaningful and holy about tax avoidance for your edification.

As I write (6th July) the flavour of the moment is the Libor scandal but I've no idea what the headlines will be about as you read this. Maybe the Euro will have finally collapsed! Maybe (ok, pigs might fly) the latest Euro Bailout (how many have there been?) will have worked!

So, I can't write anything meaningful or holy about anything in the news without it seeming dated by the time people come to read it.

Now, this isn't my cue to complain about the availability of 24/7 news and instant comment these days. I quite like it really. Indeed, if there wasn't demand for instant comment and instant news, nobody would provide it, would they?

But let's not forget an important timeless and eternal truth as we rush to pass judgement upon those caught up in the headlamps of powerful news organisations for some real or imagined misdemeanour.

For the Bible tells us that *'... there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'* (Romans 3:22-23). All of us do things that are wrong and we all fail to do good when we can. So, with that in mind, it's rather naïve of us if we are shocked every time a scandal is exposed in the news media.

This is also why Jesus warns us against rushing to judge others when so often we're unrealistic about the extent of our own shortcomings. As Jesus said, "*Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?*" (Matthew 7:3)

And if we acknowledge that all of us fall short of God's standards from time to time then all of us (comedians and bankers included) must acknowledge our need for the forgiveness that God offers to all through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Every Blessing

Dave