

### **Good versus Evil**

*'A man possessed by an evil spirit was in the synagogue, and he began shouting, 'Why are you bothering us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One sent from God!'*

*Jesus cut him short. 'Be silent! Come out of the man.' At that, the evil spirit screamed and threw the man into a convulsion, but then he left him.'* Mark 1:25-26.

In the 1970's the movie, *The Exorcist*, was breaking box office records. It concerned a young person who was possessed by an evil spirit. The movie was based on an actual case of a 14-year-old boy who lived in Maryland in 1949. Apparently, pictures, chairs and the boy's bed would suddenly move about. At night the boy could barely sleep. After he was admitted to Georgetown University Hospital the boy began to mouth fierce curses in ancient languages and at one point, whilst strapped helplessly in his bed, long red scratches appeared on his body. The boy eventually survived an exorcism and went on to live in Washington.

As we look at that story and the story from Mark, we ask ourselves, 'What is the message here?' A simple answer would be that good will always triumph over evil. A definition of God could be 'the spirit of goodness/love dwelling in our world.' This spirit is manifested in the person of Jesus, and each one of us is challenged to live our lives in accord with that spirit. There is so much misery and pain out there, and we have a mandate as believers to combat this suffering in any way we can. In the end, God works through people.

**'So then, as often as we have the chance, we should do good to everyone.'** Galatians 6:9

**'But you, brothers and sisters, must not become tired of doing good.'**  
2 Thessalonians 3:13

### **'Good.'**

Speaking of good, the word 'good' has actually many meanings. GK Chesterton, the English poet and novelist, said that if a man were to shoot his mother-in-law at a range of 500 yards, I should call him a good shot, but not necessarily a good man.

And then there is that wonderful line given by Mae West in a movie when replying to the observation, 'Goodness, what beautiful diamonds!' she said, 'Goodness has nothing to do with it, dearie.'

### **Time for a Smile**

Two men are arrested for being drunk and disorderly. The policeman asks the first of them, 'Where do you live?' 'No fixed abode,' says the first man. 'OK,' says the policeman and turns to the second. 'So where do you live?' 'I live in the flat above him,' says the second.

### **To Ponder**

**'To know what is right and not to do it is almost as bad as doing wrong.'** Anon

## Vaccination

I reiterate what I said last week, I do hope you are getting vaccinated. It has got to be the way forward in terms of freeing ourselves from the frustrations of these lockdowns. Besides, we need to be respectful of the rights of those around us – the right to feel safe.

This does raise the matter of how we manage this issue of safety when we return to church. I don't see this happening for a few weeks but we do need to think about it. There has been much talk about making vaccination mandatory if you want to attend social gatherings or even in the workplace. Should we apply that to church attendance? But do we turn someone away from the church door? I have to say I have never done that before. Tricky one!

Having said that, I am sure some people would feel reluctant to attend unless they were confident that everyone attending was vaccinated. The Bishop will naturally be issuing guidelines/edict in due course but in the meantime any feedback is most welcome.



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