

We start off by chasing our tails (dog-like)  
We run- faster and faster  
'til we spiral out of control, into a hurricane  
Sowing mayhem and confusion and destruction  
But sadly no healing and no reconciliation and no Good News and no rage absorption  
We get it so wrong, so often  
Nonetheless we are loved. The Good News!

A belated blessed Christmas to you all and a glorious 2015. May it be a year of the Lord's favour for us all. What a challenging year 2014 has been. It has been hard for most of us on so many levels and aspects of our lives. What has been even more untenable has been our response to the suffering, difficulty, challenge and pain. God has expected, I believe, more from us especially as it relates to love. God has expected us to be more loving and patient and wiser and humbler and more forgiving. Whilst God has a right to expect much, we do not have any right to expect anything from anyone. I am convinced that that is why things go awry in relationships of every kind. The rage I have been talking about over these last six weeks is the product of this unmet expectation. Examine every, and any, conflict in the world, at home and within the wider community and you will find unmet expectation at the heart of those clashes. Of course the fuel for these ongoing clashes is precisely the fact that these expectations are unexpressed. We often don't know what we are doing wrong or badly or not at all and we don't know what is expected of us. So a potentially beautiful tapestry unravels and yet it needn't.

So expectation and unmet expectation – both of which I might add are also mostly unexpressed expectation- are big words able to cause great division and dis-ease and sadly inertia and depression from individual through to nation. God has expected us to know and understand that and to act lovingly and courageously. It is incredible how often malcontent has been expressed to the wrong people – wrong I might add for all sorts of reasons: firstly the fact that they could do very little about it and secondly the fact that they dealt with it as power fodder and division fuel. Evil has pranced about this parish with impunity and whilst it has always been there it has never been as bad as this past year. Of course we can go on yet another witch hunt which will just take us on another dead-end, enervating and depressing journey that will not bear fruit. The only fruitful path is for me to take full responsibility for everything that has happened. I am sorry for that 'everything' that has '*tsunamid*' us; for every expectation that was not met, I am truly sorry. I hope and pray that you can forgive me. I'm conscious of our calling and the vision that God has given us. We parked it for a full year and got so completely distracted and I think it appropriate to move the vision toward its goal. Unless we do, we will perish.

As I have been praying for us and our parish – as always, God gave me a new set of words to move us along.

All Saints Fourways is a beautiful place where God is doing and will continue to do beautiful things to the beautiful people of God who sadly are nonetheless wounded and enraged – filled with rage – yet are called to be reconcilers and healers despite their own pain. All are to recognise that we exist for a reason – a unique reason – unlike any other church on earth. Our calling is to deliver the Good News in a radically new way because the people in our midst are a unique and homogenous group.

All children are crucial and significant to All Saints and the age groups 12-18, 18-25 and 25+ are especially in need of the Good News: God's dream for all humanity. We at All Saints are called to reflect on this context and reality in which we find ourselves and especially on how we should do this special kind of Good News that is still the fundamental Good News of Jesus of Nazareth! All the while conscious of rage, its antecedents and its elixir; healing balm. Remember Jesus is the Rage Absorber☺

So we need to press on. We can no longer afford the luxury of the confusion of 2014. We have work to do and we need to focus our energy fruitfully. We must be vigilant and rout out meaningless distraction lest we descend into meaninglessness.

To that end I have designed two interventions for the first quarter of 2015. The first is a reinvention of the Ministry Formation Saturday mornings in January. So I am inviting everyone involved in ministry at All Saints and all who are contemplating getting involved in ministry to spend Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> from 8am to 11am. Attendance, if you are involved or wanting to be involved (parish council, sacristans, choir, parish ministers flower guild etc) is obligatory! There I've said it.

The Lent course is the second intervention. It is based on Chris Hedges' book on the Ten Commandments, "*Losing Moses On the Freeway*". I am going to avoid commentary and just commend it to you all. I hope you will all buy it and read it and make an effort to attend the Lent Course on Wednesday evenings from the 4<sup>th</sup> Feb to the 8<sup>th</sup> of April – ten weeks. I promise that it will be a life changing experience! The book is available from Loot online.