

Reflections

Religion is not only for the religious but for us all

A COUPLE of weeks ago we had the blessing and inauguration of our grotto of Our Lady and the new car park at St Boniface Church. Civic and ecumenical representatives joined us both for Mass and the buffet lunch afterwards.

While we were issuing invitations, we knew some people may not want to come for the service since they have their own worship, but we were perfectly comfortable with that and some of our guests just joined us for the lunch. I was overwhelmed by the general feeling of joy, born of sharing and caring during the service

at the Church, and even more afterwards during the lunch at the Pavilion in the park.

These days there is over-emphasis on reasoning, physical experience and experimentation as part of intellectual endeavour. The understanding is that anything scientific needs to be upheld while religion is unscientific and should be dismissed or ignored. Science is very important and necessary for us; it aids every aspect of our life. However, as humans we still struggle with fear, anxiety, grief, resentment and guilt, for which science has very little to offer.

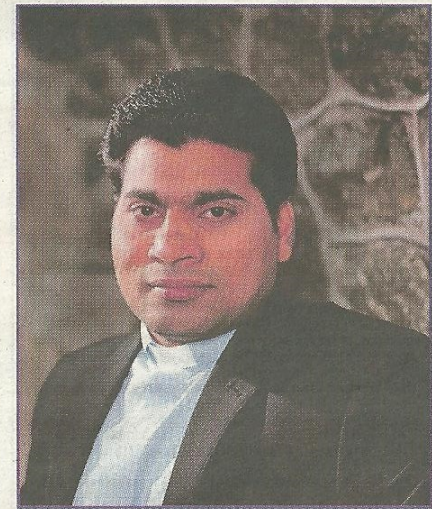
Seeking remedies for these struggles without recourse to religion and its teaching is difficult; for so long religion has been very much intertwined with almost every aspect of human life.

Just like our celebration where the service lasted an hour, with music and singing, but lunch went on for over three hours with chatter, laughter, food and drink, there are plenty of opportunities for humanity to draw from religion and its expressions. This helps us lead a healthy life, often reducing, and in some cases alleviating, fear, anxiety, grief, resentment and guilt.

Modern minds do sometimes amplify the historical tensions that have existed between science and religion. It is important to be aware of these tensions in order to develop a mindset free of extreme views of rigidity, dogmatism and authoritarianism which could lead to destructive radicalisation.

We should have an integrative approach towards life so that it is peaceful, joyful and meaningful. For that, there is a need to maintain a balance without resorting to extremes of outright dismissal or unexamined acceptance. There is so

much in religion that can make our lives happier and healthier if we can learn the art of finding the balance and integrative approach. The benefits of religion are not left only for those who identify themselves as religious but for everyone, including the so-called atheists and agnostics. And so everybody who reads and hears about this article is welcome to St Boniface Church, Okehampton and Holy Family Church in Chagford. In addition, for forthcoming events please keep an eye on our website www.stbonifacechurch.co.uk



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