

# All Saints Alive

## CURATE'S COMMENTARY



### ***Love without strings .....***

My grandmother always used to tell me to make the most of being young because time went past faster the older you got. Like many teenagers faced with the unfathomable sayings of the older generation, I smiled indulgently, pretended I knew what she meant and secretly wondered if she was really from this planet!!

This memory came back to me as I sat down to write this article and realised that despite it seeming like we had only just finished with our Christmas celebrations that it was almost Lent.....where did the time go.....and does the speed at which this year seems to have gone by now mean that I am officially part of that unfathomable older generation and, in my own words, really from this planet!!

It's funny isn't it how sometimes the things people say to you only make sense years later? I wonder now what else went through my grandmother's mind as she watched her grandchildren charging around her garden, carefree and untroubled by the practicalities of life, confident that they would be fed when they were hungry, comforted if they fell and wrapped up in loving arms if anything should spoil their day. I never questioned the love my grandmother had for me, I accepted it, relied upon it and trusted that she would find a way to help me through whatever fix I had got myself into. So if I could accept the unconditional love my grandmother had for me, surely trusting in God's unconditional love for me would be a breeze.....wouldn't it?!!

Maybe that's what my grandmother meant about making the most of being young, of

having the innocence and ability to accept the gift of love freely given without question, not for a second stopping to wonder if I deserved it nor question the generosity of the giver. Yet now that I'm older I seem to have lost the ability to accept gifts unquestioningly, to wonder what I have done to deserve it and worse, even wonder what I might have to do in return should I accept it. It's this realisation that has brought me back into the present, to the approaching season of Lent, a time when we take stock of where we are at, a time for reflection and change and a refocussing on Christ and his ultimate sacrifice for us all.

Traditionally, the forty days in Lent were marked by fasting, both from foods and festivities, and by other acts of penance. The three traditional practices to be taken up with renewed vigour during Lent are prayer (justice towards God), fasting (justice towards self), and almsgiving (justice towards neighbour).

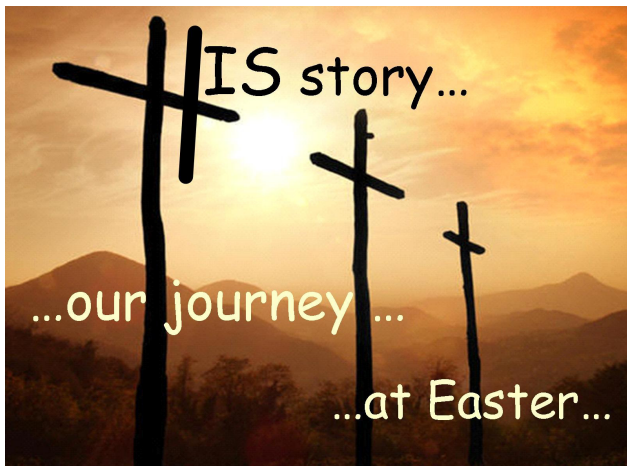
However, in modern times, observers give up an action of theirs considered to be a vice, add something that is considered to be able to bring them closer to God, and often give the time or money spent doing that to charitable purposes or organizations.

So, what does this Lent hold for you? Will you be giving up chocolate maybe? Or alcohol or coffee? Perhaps putting aside the money you would have spent on these luxuries and donating it to charity? I haven't made up my mind yet but I can't help but think that the recollection of the memory of my grandmother wasn't simply

a coincidence rather a 'God-incidence', a prompting of what God would like me to reflect on this Lenten period. To think again about the time when I freely accepted the gift of love from another with the innocence of a child, of when I allowed myself to be fed, comforted and consoled without wondering if I deserved it. This is, after all, precisely what our Lord offers to each one of us, his children, day after day, week after week, year after year.

Whatever discipline you choose to give up or take up this Lent, my prayer for all of us is that we find the time to build on our relationship with God, to come before him with child-like openness and a willingness to accept his unconditional love, to be fed when we are hungry, to be consoled when we are hurt and to be guided through the storms of life, trusting that even when we are unsure of the path ahead, he knows the way and will bring us to a place of safety and peace.

With love  
Ginni



23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015

It's only 5 more weeks until The Easter Journey arrives once more at All Saints. 60 children from one school have already accepted their invitation to come along and experience the message of Easter – and that was only two days after the invitation went out!! We are expecting two other schools and at least 90 more children to add their names to the list very shortly BUT the Easter Journey can only happen if we have enough volunteers on the day!

You don't need any special skills to be able to help, just a willingness to give up a few hours of your time to share the message of our Christian faith, through story-telling and activities, with children who are eager to hear it.

Full training on how we present the Easter Journey to the children will be given.

If you would like to be part of this exciting project then please see Ginni after the Sunday service or email her on [revginni@gmail.com](mailto:revginni@gmail.com)

### Lent Lunches

Once again, Churches Together in Hertford warmly invite you to support the Christian Aid Lent Lunches which will take place in the Quaker Room, every Wednesday in Lent.

Coffee will be available from 11.00 and lunch (soup, sandwich, fruit and tea or coffee) will be served from 12.00 to 1.45. The cost of a lunch will be £4 this year.

