

St Martin's Vicarage
26 Vicar's Road
London
NW5 4NL

The Parishes of Fen Ditton, Horningsea, and Teversham

22 September 2020

Dear friends —

I am writing rather belatedly to thank everyone who contributed to such a generous leaving gift. I was rather taken aback. I have yet to get to the National Gallery but from the other part of your generosity I have ordered a handmade pocket knife from a cutler in Sheffield—some boys never grow up!—and there is still plenty remaining.

The first few weeks in the Bishop of Southwark's office have given me lots to do. The pace is fast; there is much to learn, and many new people to meet. Although I knew the Diocese was one of the three largest (depending on how you measure it), I hadn't really grasped what that meant on the ground. Bishop Christopher is prayerful, extraordinarily hard-working, and wise.

At the start of September, Carol and I were able to have a couple of weeks away in Northumberland. The weather was very kind to us and there were even a few days when the sea was still and the winds mild. We had a beautiful day on Holy Island and visited St Aidan's shrine at Bamburgh. You feel very close to the saints up there. It is good for the heart!

I hope you are all good spirits, despite the uncertainty of Covid. Do what you can, where you can; encourage one another; say your prayers; gather for the sacrament and, if you are unable, know that you carry one another in worship. As the hymn has it:

We thank you that your church, unsleeping
while earth rolls onward into light,
through all the world her watch is keeping,
and rests not now by day or night.

You remain in my prayers and I am thankful for our companionship in faith.

All good things, as ever



Alun Ford