

# FR ALAN'S REFLECTION

## SATISFYING OUR HUNGER

Last Wednesday week I, along with 5 members of the Parish Pastoral Council, attended a meeting (via zoom) joining parishioners from Ringwood North Parish. During this meeting we watched the first video from the Alpha Series 'Is there more to life than this?' In this 21-minute film there were a couple of quotes from famous people which I found to be quite noteworthy. The first one was from the actor Jim Carrey who once said, 'I wish that everyone could get rich and famous and have everything they ever dreamed of so that they would know that's not the answer.'

The story of the loaves and the fishes is the one story that can be found in all 4 Gospels. When I reflected on this Sunday's Gospel from Matthew, I thought about Jim Carrey's words in the light of these words from the Gospel "they all had as much as they wanted." I took these words as meaning far more than Jesus simply satisfying their empty stomachs. These words mean Jesus can satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart. There is nothing wrong with wanting nice things so long as we understand that none of those things can achieve that. If those things become the focus of our lives what we will discover is that we are never satisfied. We will always want more.

The second story from this Alpha Series was about Freddie Mercury, the lead singer from the rock group Queen. During his life he amassed a huge fortune and attracted millions of fans. Yet in an interview just before his death he admitted that he was desperately lonely. He said, 'You can have everything and still be the loneliest man and that's the most bitter type of loneliness. Success has brought me world idolisation and millions of pounds, but it prevented me from having the one thing we all need, a loving ongoing relationship.'

Ultimately there is only one relationship that is ongoing and totally loving and goes on forever and that is a loving relationship with God. It is only God who can fill up the empty spaces in our lives. St Augustine spent the first part of his life believing that happiness would come through the fulfilment of earthly desires but ultimately found that those things left him with feelings of emptiness and loneliness from within. He wrote, 'you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you' The First Reading urges to listen to what God is offering us. If we do this our souls will live. All of us at some stage have that niggling feeling at some time, 'there has got to be something more to life than this.' This Gospel story of the five loaves and the two fish tells us that if we offer to God what we can our offering will be multiplied. The empty spaces inside of us will be filled and we will find that we will have more than enough.