

Dear Friends

My son Edward did the unheard of recently – he bought me a present, not because he felt he needed to, but simply because he saw something that he thought I might like. It is a round glass Tealight holder that he spotted in a Turkish shop while on a day trip to Arundel. It is covered in shiny pieces of coloured stone set into a plaster of Paris coating to form a Mosaic pattern. To be perfectly honest, in the cold light of day it doesn't look particularly special, it is rather heavy and there are gaps between the stones which expose the plaster of Paris base and it is definitely not the sort of thing that I would usually have around the house. However, when darkness falls and a lit candle is placed inside it, the whole thing is transformed. Because it is now that the light penetrates through these gaps and I have to say that it looks quite magical.

This reminded me of something that St Paul wrote about in his second letter to the Corinthians when he talked about our lives being like "Jars of clay", but of course, our "jars" aren't empty jars, instead we fill them with all sorts of things. Things that motivate and guide us, things that energise us and enthuse us, the things that really touch our hearts and minds, make us the people that we are and light up our lives. However, others won't be able to see this "light" unless the "jar" becomes cracked and allows it to escape.

So how does this happen? I hear you ask. The answer is quite simple – we are not perfect, either individually or corporately, we all have flaws and fallibilities. Society as a whole is certainly not perfect either. But it is these very flaws, fallibilities and shortcomings that form the medium, the "cracks" through which the light can escape.

Just think about the terrorist atrocities that have taken place recently in Manchester & London. The misguided individuals who believed that by creating death and havoc to innocent people they could somehow bring about a better world (and their own entry into paradise) could definitely be seen as the cracks. Yet because of them we witnessed many acts of heroism – people who rushed to the aid of the injured without any thought for their own personal safety, we read reports of doctors, nurses and paramedics working around the clock to treat the injured and of course since then we have witnessed thousands of people of all faiths and cultures, coming together in a united outpouring of emotion and solidarity. Their light has been shining very brightly for all to see and what a wonderful light it is too.

I know that we would all like to live in a perfect world, we might even strive for our own lives to be "perfect". Sadly, however, that is unlikely to ever happen. However, rather than bemoaning this fact, let us look around and recognise the good things and rejoice in the lights that are shining as a result of them.

With every Blessing for the coming month.



P.S. Did you know that in some cultures, manuscripts also included at least one error – because "only God is perfect"