

ST PETER'S WEEKLY NEWS

13 JUNE 2021



Growing healthy Christians

Like our physical bodies our spiritual lives require a health check from time to time. We think about our diet, what we eat and what we drink, do we get enough exercise. Mindfulness has been talked about in recent times along with mental health hitting the headlines. As routines have changed so our focus has too. This can be both good and bad or at least not so good. Such a change in focus can encourage us to give up habits only to form new ones and not always for the best.

As Christians, our spiritual life too should get regular attention. As in our physical life so our spiritual lives. Our spiritual lives can be overlooked, taken for granted, even just ignored. We can become spiritually 'podgy', becoming fat and flabby in our prayer life, putting off prayer time or just falling into the 'I'll get around to it later' trap; becoming lazy in our approach to prayer and our relationship with God.

At present, after many years, I am re-reading 'The Healthy Churches' Handbook' by Robert Warren. In it Fr Robert writes of 'Growing Healthy Churches' in which being 'healthy' is the focus and 'growing' can be numerically for the church or but is more helpfully spiritually for the individuals and community of that church. He writes of the seven marks of a healthy church: energised by faith; outward looking focus; seek to find what God wants; facing the cost of change and growth; operating as a community; making room for all; and does a few things and does them well.

Whilst reading this book I have come to wonder how we might think of these marks of a healthy church in relation to being healthy Christians. As we come into a new-normal (not my favourite phrase) I am wondering how we might reset our own journey of prayer and faith, how we might use these seven marks to examine our own relationship with God and our brothers and sisters in Christ, looking for ways to improve and grow in our faith. Over the next few weeks, I'll take some lines on this page to begin an exploration with these marks and hope you will journey with me too in reflecting on your spiritual health and how you might make it healthier.

Love and prayers,

Fr D