

From the Chaplain...

Every night before she goes to sleep, my daughter Romilly recites the Lord's Prayer. When she was younger, her mother and I would say it for her, but now she prefers to say it herself. Recently, she has even begun to sing it! I was reminded of our bedtime routine when reading this Sunday's lesson from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 4. 1-2, 6-9). In it, Moses instructs the people of Israel not just to keep God's commandments but also to 'make them known to your children and your children's children' (v.9). Not because he expects everyone will automatically comprehend the deeper meaning of the laws he has issued, but because he believes that knowing the words and passing them on will create a foundation for communal piety. By the same logic, I am less anxious that Romilly should grasp the full implications of the Lord's Prayer at the age of five than that she should be equipped with a language and reference-points for her future spiritual life. As a university chaplain, I have come across many young people whose parents raised them without such language and reference points, in the belief that their children did not need them. But the young people themselves have often expressed regret at this decision, feeling it has deprived them of a valuable resource for constructing moral and theological meaning. None of us can be sure what members of the next generation will do with the inheritance that we pass on to them. But in preserving it and sharing it, we can at least hope that they, in Moses' words, will become 'wise and understanding people' (v. 6).

Please note that due to the running of 'The Big Half' half-marathon, there will be no 11.00am Eucharist this Sunday, 1 September. We will instead gather at 5.00pm on Sunday for a service of Evensong, with senior choral scholar Rachel Miller as our cantor.

Yours faithfully,
Robert

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