**The Rector's Ramblings**



Many years ago, when I worked in an office, I had a boss who always insisted on speaking to the manager in any shop he entered, and always wanted to see the senior partner in a law firm, and the senior doctor at his local surgery. Now whether he told himself, erroneously in my opinion, that he would get better service from the person at the top, or whether he thought they would simply be more knowledgeable, I don’t know, because when I talked with him about it, the real reason was plain to see. It wasn’t about them; it was about him. Seeing the boss, being served by the senior partner, made him feel important. It made him feel more valued.

I experienced something similar this week in the shop. A gentleman came in and strode up to the counter. Ignoring the person I was actually in the middle of serving he demanded ‘I want to see the manager!’. Now I politely asked him to wait for a moment, finished serving the lady in front of me, and then told him that the manager didn’t work on Mondays but I’d be happy to help (ignoring the fact that he obviously assumed I wasn’t the manager). He harrumphed, said no he needed the manager, and turned to leave. As he did so, a friend from my old parish came in and, as she always does, called out a cheery ‘Morning Rev’ as she made her way to the birthday cards. The gentleman turned back, looked me up and down, and with raised eyebrows asked ‘Rev?’. Yes, I replied, as well as being deputy manager here, I am also a Priest in the Church of England. His attitude then changed. Suddenly I was worthy of his attention, suddenly I was ‘good enough’ for him to speak to. Could I help him, yes of course, he simply wanted a bible for his grandson and after looking at a couple of option, picked one, paid for it and left, with a not very cheery, ‘goodbye Vicar’.

The experience remined me of when my sister worked in an optician. The first appointment for the day was for a Mr Lennox and as he walked in she looked up, recognised him, and said ‘Good morning, Your Grace’ because it was the old Duke of Richmond. Now he also harrumphed a little, in a good-natured way, but for the opposite reason to my customer. He didn’t want special treatment; he didn’t want people to treat him differently to anyone else. If he came on a day when the owner of the business was away, he was more than happy to be seen by the stand-in, the locum, because he trusted their skill, he trusted their training, and if they were good enough for you or me, they were good enough for him.

In St Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he reminds them that ‘There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, because all of you are one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal 3: 28). Now we don’t know what was happening in the church community in Galatia at that time that prompted these words, but we can make an educated guess from other parts of Paul’s letter, and indeed his letters to other faith communities. Just like my customer, just like my old boss, just like many people today, there were people in those communities who thought themselves more important than others. There were people in those faith communities who sadly followed some of the ’old ways’, meaning they wouldn’t engage with people from other nationalities, wouldn’t treat others equally.

Now I don’t know why the customer wanted to be served by The Manager, or why he decided that a priest in the shop would be more helpful than my colleague but whatever his reason, I wanted to remind him of St Paul. I wanted to remind him that all are equal in the sight of God, and all should be equal in our sight. I wanted to tell him about the Duke; I wanted to remind him that the Rock on which Christ built his church was a simple fisherman. I wanted to remind him of the Golden Rule of Faith; one I have rambled on before and will no doubt ramble on again – Treat others as you would wish to be treated. If we all did that, the world would be a much better, and more peaceful, place.

*Rev Sarah*

**Worship in the Valley Parish**

**28th September**

**Said Holy Communion**

# 10am

**St Andrew's, West Dean**

**Children’s Church  
28th September**

**11am**

**St Andrew's. West Dean**

**Rev Sarah Manouch**

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*Please note that I am part-time. My principal working days are Friday and Saturday as well as Sunday. I am not available on a Thursday.*