

## The Rector's Pint

October 2025

At the end of July, Cath had a scheduled operation on two of her finger joints. A few days later she was back in hospital in great pain. An examination revealed that the site was badly infected. Cath was beginning to spike a temperature, and she was rapidly administered IV antibiotics, given a local anaesthetic and the wound was cleaned. She was admitted to hospital and remained there for nine days.

I could focus on the few days of missed opportunities which led to her admission, but I want to move on from that. Once admitted the care she received was second to none. The healing is long and arduous and involves weekly trips to the JR and I have been taught how to dress the wound in between visits at home!

During all this, we have both appreciated the quality of the care and the kindness of those who have looked after her. I've also enjoyed the excuse of every appointment to indulge in what is now my standard Pret A Manger breakfast Muffin and Cappuccino!

A recent visit found me in a reflective mood. Hospitals are remarkable places, life and death, joy and hope, pain and sorrow, all are to be found there. Why do we do it? As a race, why do we invest so much into human care? I think it reflects the heart of God. Jesus manifested this in his healing miracles, acts of restoration born of compassion. 'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made', Cath quoted that from Psalm 139 as she surveyed a model of the complexities of the human hand in the hand therapy room. The capacity of the body to heal is a remarkable thing. The care and compassion of those called (and it is a calling) to work in the world of healing is equally remarkable.

I have always believed that the mark of a civilisation is how it responds to those who are most vulnerable. I know that our own health service is ferociously costly, and tough choices have to be made in the allocation of care. There are those, of course, who would have it transformed into a system that basically allows access to the best services only to those who can afford to pay. I think that is a terrible prospect.

Cath's infection took her dangerously close to septicaemia. Yes, mistakes were made that could have prevented that, but once recognised, her treatment has been extraordinary. We are filled with gratitude; I believe that hospitals are in every sense sacred places. They should be cherished as should all those who work in them, at every level and in whatever role.

My final Sunday as Rector of the Benefice is October 26th at the 10.30am service at St. Mary's, Great Milton, to which everyone will be welcome. I will offer a few thoughts one more time for the November 'pint'.

Simon