

Faith Comment for 9th Jan [by Ann Saunders 01730 300241]

#otherstoo

In the less hectic days of January there is more time to reflect on things past and things to come. I found myself once again thinking that I am very grateful for living in a town like Petersfield which has so many caring and good people, when in general the culture is 'me, me, me', even T-shirts declare it.

In November I attended a Petersfield Town Council Meeting and was warmed by the camaraderie and goodwill of the Mayor and the councillors who are all giving up their time for Petersfield. We heard from Beth Svarovska of the Petersfield Society who led a mammoth litter-pick before Remembrance Day gathering 108 bags of rubbish by 114 volunteers including 64 pupils from The Petersfield School and Ditcham Park School.

Frequently, we read letters in this paper from people who have been helped by passers-by and news of monies raised for charity by various groups in the area.

EHDC Councillor Roger Millard in his New Year message thanked everyone 'for making East Hampshire the caring, strong-hearted community it is' and said that 'we can all do something to help others' and highlighted the Volunteer Awards, saying how we 'can make a massive difference to the lives of people who need our support'.

We can all make a difference in helping to make the world a better place. It's a Wonderful Life was voted the best Christmas Film of all time. The film has a powerful message about how one person can make such a difference for the good. If we are apathetic about things, life can turn out differently and sometimes for the bad. If you see things that are not right you can intervene and make that difference, but sometimes we need the moral courage or a nudge to do so.

I almost phoned, I almost spoke.
I almost invited the next-door folk.
Oh, what a pity no one knew
All the good I meant to do.

Pope Francis in his recent Apostolic Exhortation, Gaudete et Exsultate (Rejoice and Be Glad), tells us that God wants us all to be saints and writes, 'I like to contemplate the holiness present in the patience of God's people...Very often it is a holiness found in our next-door neighbours, those who, living in the midst, reflect God's presence.'

Put in another way, in 2019 perhaps we can strive to be a little less #metoo and more of #otherstoo and remember the words of Christ, 'Truly...as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.' Matthew 25v40

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