

Happiness in Christ

Dear friends,
Please let me begin by saying a heartfelt “Thank you” on behalf of my wife Elizabeth and myself for the many kind messages of support and prayer we received whilst being seriously ill earlier this year. The diocesan family is very special and we really appreciated your loving care. It made a great difference to our mental health and feeling of well-being.



This year’s (very delayed) FA Cup Final was renamed the Heads Up FA Cup Final after the project led by HRH Prince William to harness the influence of football to encourage people to discuss more openly the vital matter of mental health. This has never been more important, with people around the world spending months isolated at home due to lockdown. One strapline claimed; “Heads Up – Wembley Stadium may be closed, but the conversation about mental health is now open”.

I’ve recently been impressed by a movement called ‘Action for Happiness’, founded by the economist Professor Lord Richard Layard. They suggest 10 simple practices – the initials spelling out GREAT DREAM – to improve mental wellbeing and increase happiness:

1. Giving – do things for others
2. Relating – connect with people
3. Exercising – take care of your body
4. Awareness – live life mindfully
5. Trying Out – keep learning new things
6. Direction – have goals to look forward to
7. Resilience – find ways to bounce back
8. Emotions – look for what’s good
9. Acceptance – be comfortable with who you are
10. Meaning – be part of something bigger

(From *How To Be Happy* by Vanessa King)

For me, this great dream is fulfilled as we share our lives with Jesus, who said: “I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10.10). Good mental health and wellbeing are integral to that fullness of life, which is Jesus’ desire for everyone.

At the start of lockdown I quoted these words: “Whatever these coming days hold, let’s be mindful of one another, alert to the cries of a hurting world, and confident in the love of God, from which nothing can separate us”. They remain my prayer for us all.

With my love, thanks, prayers and best wishes,

+John
Bishop of Brixworth