



Dear friends and parishioners,

I now live in a house with a teenager and a nearly-teenager – and it's an interesting, if not entirely un-stressful, place to be ... partly because their teenage lives both mirror and are completely different from how I remember my own teenage years.

On a conference this year about developing work with children and young people the speaker, who was the Archbishop of Canterbury's adviser on evangelism (that's talking about God to you and me), reminded us of the context in which many of our teenagers live their lives. He mentioned five specific drivers which were:

- relationships and commitment – friendship groups and being 'in' or 'out'
- connectivity and communication – that phone which seems welded to the hand!
- authenticity – 'be true to yourself'
- living in the moment – everything is 'now'
- increasing fearfulness, anxiety and concern – about themselves, others, the state of the world etc. etc.

Some of these were certainly part of my teenage life, others much less so, but what struck all of us (just as the speaker had meant it to), was how much the faith of Christianity intercepts with all of these. It is a faith built on relationship – with God and with others. It is communicated through word, image and action; and Jesus constantly used all of these in his ministry. It is about being true to yourself – made in the image of God. It is something to which we respond in the present, all the time, being loved into wholeness. And it is something which constantly proclaims the presence of a God who loves us. We hear 'Do not be afraid' ringing through all the words of Jesus.

Sometimes it can seem as though faith is irrelevant, but it may be that it has much more to say than we know. It has certainly helped this mum-of-teenagers to look and listen differently (and yes, in case you wondered, I am still getting things wrong, but there is time and space in any relationship to go right again...)

With my love and prayers, this month of May and always,

Nicola