

Making a contribution

Heather Smith *reflects on Matthew 10:40-end*

The charity Water Aid ran a series of adverts for support which showed a young child walking miles in search of water. On finding it, the water was dirty and dangerous to drink, but there was no choice because nothing else was available. The child would take a drink and then fill up a large plastic container with the dirty water to take home to the family. The film showed the child struggling to carry the heavy burden, trudging home in inadequate shoes in the searing heat. Who, confronted by such a child, would not give a cup of cold water if it were within their power to do so? Jesus tells us that God values this help – it brings a reward.

In the West, we are unlikely to come face to face with a child who makes this journey. Many of us do not often encounter the real needs that exist within our own society and in the wider world. Even so, as human beings loved by God, we are connected to those who do not have what they need. But who to help? We are often inundated with requests for funds from charities and it can be very hard to decide who to support. Our funds are not infinite, and neither is our time. But Jesus values just a small cup of water, which for a thirsty child could be the difference between death and life. The smallest contribution could transform a life. We may never know the effect, but God does. 🙏



Climbing Kilimanjaro – part III – accepting care

by John Witcombe

John Witcombe continues his account of climbing Kilimanjaro.

My main bag would be carried by porters who, according to the regulations, are permitted to carry only fifteen kilograms per trekker. We had all brought a small shop's worth of snacks and a wardrobe of clothes to keep us cool as we

started, and warm as we summited. We couldn't take it all. The truth is we can never know exactly what we are going to need on any journey. The balance between sensible precaution and anxious over-preparation is difficult to achieve. Prayer about what to leave in and what to take out – sometimes called the preacher's prayer – is vital on occasions like this. And to know that sometimes we need to rely on others.

As we arrived into camp every night, Modeste was waiting to brush the volcanic dust from our boots. It was tempting to turn it down out of embarrassment, but sometimes the best way to honour those who serve us is to accept what's graciously given, and to take pleasure in it. 🙏

Generous God, we cannot know who needs our help the most, but you do. Show us the resources we have at our disposal and grant us a spirit of generosity, so we are open to giving where it is needed and where our hearts are touched by you. Amen.

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

For many it's the weekend for ordinations in the local cathedral. I was ordained as a priest twenty-five years ago this summer, not on St Peter's Day but a few days later, on St Thomas' Day. I hold my saint dear because he wanted to handle the one he had loved and

lost before he could believe. That willingness to put his finger in a wound, to get real and dirty, has inspired me all my Christian life and especially in my priestly ministry.

Farming, even on a small scale, means getting "stuck in", often literally, to find the source of pain and of joy. Assisting a ewe giving birth and being covered in goo from the process and with muddy knees from kneeling beside her, is where my faith lies. God is here in the mess, the mud and the muddle and I don't want to be anywhere else. 🙏

“ He that loveth little prayeth little, he that loveth much prayeth much.

St Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD), early Christian theologian and philosopher