

29th November 2020 – 1st Sunday in Advent

Definition

“Definitions, like questions and metaphors, are instruments for thinking.”

Neil Postman, Language Education in a Knowledge Context

We were looking at getting the best out of our TV, and the information threw up the description “high definition”, usually shortened to HD. The Online Cambridge English Dictionary told me: “High Definition (HD) is a system for showing very clear pictures on a television or computer screen or for producing very clear sound.” Oh! And *I* thought my TV picture was clear enough already, till I discovered it’s only in SD, “secure digital”, the standard format, “developed and maintained over recent years to ensure uniformity across digital media storage and output.” So there!

In short, HD allows me to see things more clearly. Digging around a little more, I found a quote from a TV actress: “I hate filming in HD. Close-ups show every skin blemish and wrinkle-line. Who wants to see my spots and patches magnified ten times right in front of you in your living room?” Who indeed? But HD, high definition, seems to be the way to go.

Richard of Wyche was born in 1197 at Droitwyche, studied canon law at Oxford and, having acquired a doctorate, became Chancellor of Oxford in 1235. In 1244 he was elected Bishop of Chichester, and he died on pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1253. But for all his varied and remarkable life, Richard of Chichester is best known for this prayer:

*Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits Thou hast given me.
O friend and brother, may I see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly and
follow thee more nearly, day by day.*

Richard of Chichester knew how to view Christ in standard format, his equivalent of SD. But he sought to go further, to see Jesus in HD, high definition, and thus find a clearer, deeper and more challenging relationship with Christ, his Lord. On this first Sunday of Advent, as the Church begins the journey to meet Christ at Bethlehem, we may be among those who have known Christ in SD for a long time. Our task now is to know Him in HD, to see Him *more* clearly, and to follow Him in a more committed way than ever before. HD with Jesus is *clearly* the way to go.

A prayer for today

Clearly, Lord, there’s a lot more of you still to be seen. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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