

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – Second Sunday in Lent**

## *Cards*

**“Présentez toujours le devant au mode.”**

**“Always present your front to the world.”**

*Jean-Baptiste Poquelin Molière, L'Avare*

In past generations, no one would think of calling on a household without presenting their calling card to prove their legitimacy. Nowadays, we're encouraged to ask for people's ID – door-to-door reps, charity canvassers, council officials, even police. "It's safer to check," we're told. But there was a time when such checks weren't specific. Everyone had a calling card – a "front" to present to the world – to explain why they'd come to call.

Several decades ago, a young minister was being trained by an experienced practitioner in the basics of pastoral care. When it came to visiting, calling on someone to offer the church's concern, the long-serving minister had this advice for his trainee: "If you call on someone and are greeted at the door, always present your calling card. And if you call on someone's home and there is no reply, always leave mine!"

As a minister, the days of presenting a calling card when I visit – far less leaving someone else's if there's no response – are long gone. But as this Season of Lent continues to unfold, I got to thinking about the arrival of the Easter message in a few weeks' time, and what calling card we're given to indicate what or who is coming to our door.

The story of John the Baptist in the Gospels gives us the calling card we need. Here was John, preaching a gospel of repentance. "You need to change," he said, "to turn your life around." Then Jesus appears, God's gift to humanity, blessed by the Spirit, to show how that change might come about. "I have come to bring you life, and life in all its fullness."

A calling card was presented, a message that individual people and the world at large should have a long, hard look at life and purpose and see what could be made new. John had a calling card that wasn't his own but was offered to announce Jesus' coming and purpose.

In Lent, that calling card is presented again, so that we might know who is coming to our door and be very sure of the purpose of the visit.

### **A prayer for today**

*Loving God, might I be able to present your calling card as I share your love today?*

*An original reflection by © Tom Gordon*

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