

25th July 2022

Prime

"Put thyself into the trick of singularity."

William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (by Malvolio)

Google the word "prime" and you'll find endless references to Prime Ministers – and not just in relation to recent UK political life. In this context, "prime" means "first", the top Minister among many, as is the case throughout the world. But the word comes up regularly for me in another way, through purchases from, and adverts about, the ubiquitous *Amazon*. As an *Amazon Prime* customer, I get preferential treatment – eg my goods get delivered free. There's stuff about streaming *Amazon TV* too, but I don't understand all that. All I know is that (as *Amazon* wants, I'm sure) calling me an *Amazon Prime* customer makes me feel good.

In the BBC education website for primary, secondary and 16+ young people, *BBC Bitesize* (now, it's got stuff I *do* understand), there's this little informative piece under the heading, "What are Prime Numbers?"

Prime numbers are special numbers, greater than 1, that have exactly two factors, themselves and 1. For example, 19 is a prime number. It can only be divided by 1 and 19. 9 is not a prime number. It can be divided by 3 as well as 1 and 9. The prime numbers below 20 are: 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19. Don't forget: the number 1 is not a prime number as it only has one factor.

So, now you know! And if you want to know more, dip into www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize and you'll find lots of equally fascinating stuff.

I like the phrase "prime numbers are special numbers." "Prime" and "special" going together. You don't have to be Prime Minister to be special. In a sermon in Athens, recorded in the Book of Acts, St Paul says:

The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth [and] is not served by human hands ... Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.

"Put thyself into the trick of singularity," Shakespeare had Malvolio say. Is that not advice we would all do well to heed? Believe in prime! "Life and breath and everything else" in the image of this God, or simply valuing the worth of every individual, we are all singular, equal, unique in all the world. And the truth is, I don't even need *Amazon* to tell me that.

A prayer for today

What can I say? Thank you for me? Yes! That's my prime thanks today! Amen