

Mayor's Civic Service 2017 (8.10.17)

Isaiah 5: 1 – 7; Matthew 21: 33 – end

I don't know whether you've ever looked at something and seen a pattern emerging. It seems to me it's a bit like that with the Mayor of Bridlington. Every other time you look, it's Cyril Marsburg! If you've ever been in the meeting room at the Town Council office, they have this rogues' gallery of photographs of all the past mayors in their mayoral robes. You look along the wall and, although they do allow someone else to have a crack for the odd there, are serried rows of Cyril Marsburgs grinning back at you! They don't have to get the photographer in any more: they just get an old one off the wall and photocopy it!

And it's not just Bridlington, either. It's Warmington –on-Sea as well. You put your feet up for a relaxing evening, get out your favourite Dad's Army DVD, it comes to the town mayor, and up pops Cyril! You can't get away from him. and that's because, ladies

and gentlemen, Cyril Marsburg is the quintessential seaside town mayor.

But, you know, Cyril Marsburg isn't the only theme emerging around here. If you read your Bible, as we have this morning, you get descriptions of the kingdom of heaven. And you get analogies of what the kingdom of heaven is like. And the theme that emerges is that the kingdom of heaven is like things that grow. Often it's vineyards. You judge things that grow by the fruit they produce, so with vineyards, it's grapes. With the kingdom of heaven the so-called fruits are righteousness and justice and a willingness to listen to the demands of God.

So when we look at the community of which Cllr Marsburg is the figurehead, together with mayoress Cllr Jackie Foster – and we don't need to be pedantic about whether particular things are technically within the jurisdiction of the Town Council, or East Riding of Yorkshire Council, or some other agency – the *whole*

The Revd Matthew Pollard, Rector of Bridlington Priory

of our community is symbolised through the office of our mayor; when we look at our community, what we're looking for is righteousness and justice and a willingness to be humble before God.

And so we rejoice that as refugees are being dispersed, Bridlington is receiving and welcoming its share and that young refugees are integrating into our schools. We rejoice that leaders in our schools are committed to cultivating fully-rounded young people and resist the pressure to turn them into mere units of exam result production. We rejoice that it seems we might at last be getting a marina; and that our community has the courage and determination to reimagine what it's like to be a leisure destination in a world that's moved on from traditional bucket and spade holidays.

And we pray that all in our community will have good and safe housing. We pray that folk in Brid will be protected from descending into chronic and chaotic debt as the Universal Credit system is rolled out. We

pray that Brid might be a place of aspiration where people are lifted out of despair and the violence and addiction it can spawn and live instead with dignity and purpose.

Most of all, what we pray for is that when we look at our town of Bridlington, what we see reflected back at us is not just the mug of Cyril Marsburg – pretty though it is – but nothing less than the image of Christ himself.

Amen.