

## Friends

As I write this, I can hear the bin-men emptying the bins along my road. A report by the BBC over the weekend, highlighting the situation in Birmingham where strikes by refuse collectors have left more than 17, 000 tonnes of waste on the streets, has left me very grateful that my bins are being emptied. It's also left me thinking more than usual about the often thankless jobs that people do that help the smooth running of our lives.

One such job that has exploded post-covid, is the delivery driver who appears at the door with a variety of takeaway foods, allowing us to have almost anything we can imagine delivered. All of this is very helpful on days like yesterday, when an unevenly replaced rack in the oven dropped my casserole all over the kitchen floor and left the manse family all coming into the kitchen saying: "Something smells wonderful... Oh!" Thank goodness for the option of a quick takeaway! It's all a far cry from the days of Jesus when food was much simpler and much closer to the point of production. Jesus and his followers ate fish they had caught themselves, plucked wheat-heads to nibble on from the fields that they walked through and heard his agricultural parables whilst walking past vineyards, fig trees and olive groves.

In our day, it's harder to remember where food comes from, apart from the supermarket or restaurant, and it's easy to forget that every piece of household waste has to go somewhere. As an early climate change activist said, "We think that we will throw it away, but there is no 'away'".

Especially on nights like last night, I find myself caught between the dictates of good care for the climate that would deplore motorbikes rushing around to deliver ready-cooked meals to individual families, and the convenience of a quick takeaway when faced with the loss of my lovely casserole. As the days grow longer and nature shows us all her created beauty, perhaps it's a good moment to take stock of our buying in and throwing out habits, and to be extra grateful for all those people who do difficult and not always pleasant jobs so that we can enjoy the lives we have.

God bless, Vicci