

May I speak in the name of the living God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hands up if you have read this book: 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea'? For those of you that haven't read it or have forgotten what it is about, it is about a tiger who interrupts a tea party between a mother and daughter and eats all the food, drinks all the tea, drinks every last drop of water and then promptly goes on his way. After a bit of reflection and a meal at a restaurant, the family then prepares for the return of the Tiger by buying loads of supplies, including a large tin of tiger food.

Let us change the title for a minute to 'Jesus Who Came to Tea'. What would you do to prepare for Jesus' visit to your home for tea? Let us get some ideas..... Everything you would do if anyone important was due to arrive for a visit, I imagine.

I am assuming however that, like the Tiger, Jesus came unannounced and I am sure many of us can understand and empathise with Martha's panic when opening the door to find Jesus on her doorstep unexpectedly. Both Martha and her sister had probably told him 'To pop in whenever he is in town.' He had obviously taken them up on their offer and came to accept their hospitality and have some downtime – something very necessary in amongst all the miracles, parables and arguments during his time on Earth.

The sad thing is that, even though preparations for the Tiger's return were in place, the Tiger never did come back. It would have been so much more worthwhile getting to know the Tiger in the first place by sitting down and talking to him about what life is like as a tiger instead of stressing about all the food and drink that he was consuming. Jesus is basically telling Martha that the jobs will always be there - the laundry basket will never stay empty - but he will not always be there to talk to and learn from. She does not need to feel guilty that her home is not in pristine condition. Would we be willing to look past all the dirty dishes in our lives if Jesus came knocking at our door?

Families and friends of E and H. It is very easy to get weighed down with details of the baptism celebration, I know, I've been there before – who needs to be where, what needs to be done, who needs to be fed... While I am in no way suggesting that these things are not important and don't need to be done, what is more important is to focus on the reason for the celebration. Take time to stand aside at some point today and observe, picturing the party in heaven happening at the same time and remembering the important promises that have been made. Very similar advice was given to my husband and I on our wedding day and it made all the difference. If we take that time to reflect and praise God during the big occasions in our lives, it becomes so much easier to do it in everyday life as well.

A very famous little boy has recently been baptised and a quote from an article written by a vicar from a parish in Essex really stuck with me: 'Whatever you do or don't believe, Archie's christening is a great opportunity to pause and think about those precious things we might take for granted: Life, love, family and friends.'

Amen