

# The smallest contribution

Heather Smith *reflects on* Matthew 10:40-end

The charity WaterAid once ran a series of adverts for support which showed a young child walking miles in search of water. On finding it, the water was dirty and dangerous to drink, but nothing else was available so the child had no choice. The child would take a drink and then fill up a large plastic container with the dirty water to take home to their family. The film showed the child struggling to carry the heavy burden, trudging home in inadequate shoes and searing heat.

Who, confronted by such a child, would not give a cup of cold water if it were within their power to do so? Jesus tells us that God values this help – it brings a reward.

In the West we're unlikely to come face-to-face with a child who makes this journey. Many of us do not often encounter the real needs that exist within our own society and in the wider world. Even so, as human beings loved by God, we are connected to those who do not have what they need. But who to help? We are often inundated with requests for funds from charities and it can be very hard to decide who to support. Our funds are not infinite, and neither is our time. But Jesus values just a small cup of water, which for a thirsty child could be the difference between death and life. The smallest contribution could transform a life. We may never know the effect, but God does. ☺



**Generous God, we cannot know who needs our help the most, but you do. Show us the resources we have at our disposal and grant us a spirit of generosity, so we are open to giving where it is needed and where our hearts are touched by you. Amen.**

## Writing the journeys we never wanted to make

### Part 2 – journalling through adversity

by Julia McGuinness

When Debbie's husband Jonathan suffered a brain haemorrhage, Debbie used journalling to support herself through his two-year recovery period. Initially, she wrote, "whenever my feelings were overwhelming... It helped release some of the power out of the strong emotion".

And as life, and Jonathan, has changed irrevocably, Debbie has found it helpful to clarify her new situation. In her journalling, she writes: "In time I will come to connect to myself as I am and not another's ideal of me. I will learn to leave the pre-haemorrhage

Jonathan behind and live with the new 'Jonathan', which requires me to step-up, be more independent and venture out into new surroundings – which admittedly makes me uncomfortable. I will always be grateful to the 'old Jonathan' that loved me and cared for me in every aspect of life. 'Old Jonathan' helped me to face many adversities... Now the time has come to face future difficult moments and adversities alone."

Julia is a lay reader licensed to Chester Cathedral, where she was formerly poet-in-residence. Her book – *Writing the Journeys We Never Wanted to Make: a guide to journalling for resilience* – is published by Wellness Books. ☺

## Summer reading

*Pray, Love, Remember,*  
by Michael Mayne

*Recommended by* Heather Smith

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love remember," says Ophelia in *Hamlet*. Using Shakespeare's phrase for the title of his 1998 Lent book, Michael Mayne (1929-2006) takes us on a tour of Westminster Abbey.

Mayne was Dean of Westminster between 1986 and 1996. For him the Abbey, though often crowded, is a sacred space. Beginning with an Ash Wednesday reflection on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, he notes that everyone who enters the Abbey, great or not, must walk past, reminding

us that we have no right to call anyone ordinary. Mayne continues to St Faith's Chapel, whose "early morning stillness [is] the most valued space of the day," and a starting point for thinking about prayer and temptation. He carries on to the Nave and the Quire, St Edward's Shrine, the West Front and the Innocent Victims' Memorial, pausing for reflection in each place.

*Pray, Love, Remember* is foremost a book of compassion and deep humanity, in which Michael Mayne inspires us to be who we really are. ☺

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight.”

Philippians 1:9