

Thoughts from the Manse 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

I know that quite a few of you enjoy doing jigsaw puzzles, and during lockdown they have become a way of passing time with swapping happening between friends and families. My sister was telling me recently how she had started a puzzle and left it to do something else, then found her husband at the table absorbed in fitting the pieces together. He could not leave it until it was finished and other 'jobs' were abandoned.

For some people the challenge of a large puzzle is a hobby, although whilst I enjoy doing a large puzzle with the family, I do not find it a hobby. I can, however, lose many hours with Japanese logic puzzles, but there are times when I need a break from the screen and on those occasions I turn to a jigsaw. I have a collection of small but intricate jigsaws, made from wood and hand cut, with each puzzle containing five 'whimsy' pieces. They are only 40-50 pieces and take 15 – 25 minutes to complete.



I have a method and I am strict about this; I never refer to the picture whilst doing the puzzle but turn out the pieces, sorting out the side pieces, which are not always obvious in these tiny masterpieces, the five whimsy pieces which are set aside and putting the middle pieces in the box lid. I then assemble the frame before fitting the remaining pieces inside the frame. It is a short time of relaxation both for the mind, the spirit and the eyes.

There is one of these tiny puzzles which takes longer, a lot longer and it goes by the title 'The puzzle that burnt the turkey'. It is a picture of snow-covered trees by a lake which reflects the trees. Complex enough, but the difficulty lies in the fact that there are only five shapes of pieces in this 55-piece puzzle and it has an irregular shaped frame so there are no obvious corners or sides. It is a challenge that is belied by the small number of pieces.



Every human is a bit like a jigsaw puzzle. We all have our outer edges, the bit we present to the world, but beneath is a complex mix of history and experiences and only very close family and friends may ever glimpse the completed picture. The trend for family ancestry has begun to inform us of some of the middle bits, where we have come from and to whom we are connected, and spirituality also explores the middle bit of the puzzle seeking an understanding of what makes us uniquely who we are.



I think we are all a bit like Russian dolls, with multiple layers, some of which we are born with, and others which we acquire during our journey through life. Sometimes these layers can inhibit our way forward and we need to recognise and remove the layers which are preventing even ourselves from seeing the true self within. It can be a bit like discovering that the pieces in the box do not make up the picture on the lid.

Quantum science is revealing the depth of connection between everything and everyone in creation. We are all energy, and our reality arises through bonds between energy and the energy is constantly changing. In one book that I read it claimed each of us shares energy with Marilyn Munroe and that is more than likely. These connections go deeper though, and we are also connected through the field of energy that is the core of everything. Some call this the Zero Point Field, others refer to it as the Source of all being, or the Cosmic Consciousness, whilst some name this eternal connection God. We are also discovering that energy which has been connected retains the memory of that connection even when separated by some distance and this has implications for the way we understand our humanity. It can all be quite puzzling. In fact, the universe is really the eternal jigsaw puzzle, and there is no point in looking for a picture because it is constantly changing.

Keep enjoying your jigsaw puzzles in whatever form they come, but don't forget the bigger puzzle that lies within and around. It is the puzzle of life.