

## Article for Moreton Hall Directory

How are you getting on with your New Year's resolutions? I have been attempting to ride my bicycle more often with some success so far; other resolutions, perhaps not so well.

In a few weeks we are going to begin the season of Lent which has recently undergone something of a revival. Many people choose not just to give something up but rather to do some good. Many charities encourage us to reflect on what we consume and then give small donations, or to go out of our way to be kind or nice to somebody. This, in my opinion, is a better way of marking Lent than the other.

However, Lent is supposed to be a time of preparation and reflection for Easter. As I reflect regularly on my spiritual state and was recently challenged by a book which asked "What is the most important thing?" The author then challenged me my focus on it.

I consulted some of the great spiritual divines, chief of which is George Whitfield, a 18th century preacher. George made it very clear that Jesus Christ tells us what the most important thing is, when He says to Mary and Martha, 'Mary has chosen the one thing that is needful'. The "one thing that is needful" or "the most important thing" is to: sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to what He had to say. This is more important than hurried service and good deeds. This is what Mary chose, and was praised by Jesus for doing it.

I found this immensely challenging. I need to spend more time focussing on Jesus and what He said. When I do that not only do I find peace of mind, and contentment for my soul, I also find inner clarity and greater resources to serve, pray and love.

As we progress through February and March on our way towards Easter, the question is 'What are you doing to develop your soul?' You may be developing your mind, you are probably trying to change your body, perhaps you are thinking about building better relationships or being more efficient at work. I think the most important thing is to do what Mary did and what George Whitfield advised. Give nourishment and time to your soul, and to do that spend time with Jesus.

My challenge for you this Lent is how much time do you give to looking after your soul, your inner being, your true personality? It is a challenge for me and I hope you will be able to travel with me as we go through Lent together.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,  
Revd. Canon Jonathan Ford.  
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