

By the time you read this we will have a freshly elected Government (most likely – unless it is a closer run affair than we might think!!) In the wake of the surprise result of the Brexit referendum in the UK, I would not be foolish enough to try and write a piece assuming the victory of either side yesterday! But I reflected on this during the week, aided by a piece of Thomas Merton's writing that we received at Morning Prayer on Tuesday.

In his journals from June of 1960 (the section is entitled "Living the Gospel"), Merton was contemplating the relationship between religion and politics. His question to himself was whether his commitment to his religious vows and to the church was enough, or whether the social implications of the gospel were such that even as a solitary monk he was still called to what he terms "social action". And, the subsequent question was whether that social action necessarily led one down the path of *politics*.

His conclusion, to cut a long story short, was that in order to answer this question he needed perspective, a stepping back and withdrawing, the better to understand how he was called to act in certain circumstances (and also how he might be called to *not* act in other circumstances). All of which made me think – here was a monk, already withdrawn from society as a whole, recognising that he needed to withdraw even further in order to discern an action. How can we, who very much live in the world of today, ourselves withdraw that we might also discern what is our mode and place of action in God's world?

At least here at St. Martin's we do offer the opportunity to reflect in times of silence through our mid-week services, particularly. However, I believe that part of our calling as followers of Christ is to more fully explore and take the opportunities for silence and contemplation, and I would encourage you to find ways to do this, so that we might more fully recognise and discern God's call to social action.

It is with great pleasure that I include a photo of Rafael Newport Birnberg, the first born of Ruth and Alex. Many of you will know both of them from their time worshipping with us, and of course through Ruth acting as Office Manager through part of last year until Easter this year. Rafael's entry into the world was very rapid, with Alex and Ruth acting as their own midwives, as it happened! Ruth was then forced to spend a week in hospital following the birth, with dangerously high blood pressure. Upon their return home, all has progressed well. Rafael is now putting on weight, and both Mum and he are healthy. I visited them through the week, and brought wishes to them from the parish, which they greatly appreciated.

May Cyril, Irenaeus, Peter & Paul, and all the Saints walk with you this week...  
Sam

