

Wednesday Word 2 June 2021 Dr Heather Payne Consultant Paediatrician

We didn't choose it, but we're living through the most incredibly rapid advances in science and technology. It's truly astonishing the way we've adapted in work and social life, keeping in touch while keeping apart, to keep everyone safe. Social distancing has changed pretty much all our daily routines- I used to call it working from home but now I think of it as living in work. But I hear that the British TV Baftas are taking things to a new level for the awards ceremony this coming Sunday, by using recorded holograms sent in place of anyone who can't be there in person. These laser-generated 3-D images are so sophisticated that they can make you think that the person is there in the room with you, because you can see them from any angle. So it might seem as if the person is in two places at once- where they actually are back at home, and where you are seeing them at the ceremony.

In our church calendar the Easter season has recently ended with Whitsun, or Pentecost- so we've been hearing about God as Holy Spirit – present with each of us in every place and every time. This is a pretty shapeshifting thought – how can God be in so many places at once? Does that follow the science? Well, they discovered how to harness light rays into holographic images in the 1940s, then over the following decades it was refined by laser technology to give today's incredibly realistic standard. So the scientific discovery was new, but the light had been there since the beginning of the universe.

Science can teach us things in different ways, and I know that many people, myself included, have felt a different type of proof. I'm talking about the lived experience of comfort, especially in sad or difficult times, that comes from belief and trust in the love of God- always with me, whether I deserve it or not. If we think of the Holy Spirit like the air around us – when we inspire, or breathe in – we are filled with oxygen and life. In the same way, the Holy Spirit can breathe into us- literally inspire us - with gifts- the unique and wonderful qualities, talents and passions that define each of us as a loved and valued individual.

I'll be watching Sunday's TV awards after I get home from evensong, and I really hope our own brilliant actors Michael Sheen and Rakie Ayola do well. I'll remind myself that if the holograms turn out to be good, it's because their originals are inspired.