

I hope you all took the opportunity to look at Mr Dickinson's assembly this morning. In it, he described the story of the boy who was throwing starfish back into the sea to ensure that they weren't stranded on the beach as the tide went out. When asked why he was bothering to do this while there were so many starfish in the world, he said that for the one starfish who had been thrown back, it would make all the difference.

I was most interested that Mr Dickinson decided to talk to you about this matter as it was exactly the theme I was thinking of taking for my letter to you today. Rather than change my topic, I thought I would merely reinforce what he said.

I think there is a real danger associated with charity and that the way in which people feel huge pressure to make a massive difference. Instead, I think we should concentrate on doing something manageable, something we really can do and I think it's so important to remember, as the story of the starfish reminds us, that your act of kindness may well make a huge difference for someone, even if it doesn't necessarily benefit huge numbers.

The point is that if everyone is able to make a small difference, the total effect will be huge. Most of us have only a minor effect upon the world but many, many small effects can lead to a very big effect just in the way that a limestone hill, stretching high into the sky, is made up from the bodies of tiny sea creatures laid down over the millennia.

With charity, if we can all do something small, we will contribute towards something very significant. We should all take time, in this period of difficulty, to think of small ways that we can improve someone else's life. Try to avoid turning in upon yourself, something which is so easy to do in the present circumstances; instead look outwards and ask what you could do for someone else. Perhaps you could ring an elderly relative and tell them about what you have been up to? Maybe you could teach a young cousin or brother something you know how to do? You could almost certainly sponsor Mr Dickinson to shave his head to raise funds for the NHS – worth doing just to see what the result is! Again, this is an example of an initiative which started out very small but which is now having a huge effect as more and more people join the shave. Never think something is not worth doing because it is too small – everyone can make a difference. And indeed, some little entertaining idea you have might catch on just in the way that William Bull's idea of head shaving his head has captured the imagination of so many, including England Rugby players

And so, at a time of isolation, make sure that you are looking outwards and thinking of other people. This is most definitely the time to look beyond those four walls. Even if you cannot get out physically, your effect could be felt elsewhere.

Tomorrow, the assembly will be taken by the Dean who has recorded a special message for us from the Deanery. Do make sure you tune in at 8.45.