

"Vale atque salve 6 July 2025 - St Thomas

"This Latin tag means something like 'Farewell and be healthy', or perhaps in a more sci-fi spirit 'May the force be with you'. I want to use it today to say thank you to the parish as a whole and to the individuals within it for my seven years as Rector here. It is an extraordinary place, which I have very much enjoyed, but it has also kept me grounded in the ordinariness of parish life, amid the shenanigans of the Church of England nationally, and (more recently) during the anxieties and uncertainties of our public life. I want to wish you well for the future, especially during the vacancy.

"Today will also see, I hope, a distinct 'Out with the old and in with the new' as we baptise a tiny baby and his mother. We know that life will continue here, and this is a visible symbol.

"St Thomas our patron, on this occasion the Apostle (and I do like both St Thomases), often suffers from the moniker of 'doubting', as if that were a bad thing. When it means a faith derived from questions, discussions, and some spiritual challenges, then doubting is so much better than certainty. So please continue to ask questions, push boundaries, and challenge authority. And have some fun at the same time!"