

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY: Wednesday 21st February 2024

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

Pat Fillery

As some of you might know, before I was ordained, I worked in a Coffee Shop, in Holy Trinity Church, Hounslow. The Coffee Shop, was at the entrance to the Church, which was situated on a busy high Street. We would get around 225 customers a day on average, and so we were reliant on some wonderful volunteers.

One of them was Pat Fillery. She was short in height but mighty in stature. When I started working there she was well into her late 70's. She would come two or three times a week, and operate the till for about 4 hours or so. She never sat down. Even when she took a break, she took it standing up. She was so good with customers. Calling each one 'dear', she would inquire about how they were, and what they were doing. This while a que would build up, going out of the door! Sometimes, customers would come into the shop, discover that Pat was on her break, and would go out so they could come back again to chat with her when she returned to work!

She was fully immersed in her role. She asked me once if I ever dreamt about working in the Coffee Shop?! When I said no, she said she did! She also told me once, how after one of her shifts, she left the Church, got on the bus to go home, and asked the driver for two brown toasts! I am not sure if that happened in the dream or in real life!

A colleague and I were once marveling and analyzing her energy, resilience, strength, dedication and commitment. Of hers, and other volunteers of her age who should have similar traits. Wondering where they got those traits from? The conclusion we came to was that they had been raised during the 2nd World War, and we had been raised on MacDonaldis!

Our society tends to write off people when they get to a certain age. It is our great loss. Here's to the Pat Fillerys of this world! All of us know one or two of them.

BIBLE VERSE:

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
planted in the house of the Lord,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.

They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,

- Psalm 92:12-14