

## The Most Remembered Clergy

On Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2021, I posted this message on Twitter: *“Think back to the best vicar/minister/priest you’ve ever known. What was it about them that made them stand out?”* I was flooded with responses. Here is a selection:

Hospitality and warmth. — Humanity. — Cared about everyone. — Open and engaging. — Spirituality. They just exuded a sense of prayer and holiness. — Honest. — Authentic and Christlike. — A pioneering and missional approach to ministry and a quiet wisdom. — Accessible communication. — Humility. Integrity. Collegiality. Utter disinterest in careerism. Ability to speak with anyone. — Genuine care. A non-judgemental attitude when I was a teenager and struggling with life. — A complete absence of “agendas”. — Prayerfulness, devotion to people and altar. Availability. — Prayerfulness, warmth, love and liturgical prowess. — Genuine interest in individuals and their growth. — Vulnerability, warmth and humour. — Sense of humour. — Completely committed to their people. They really did “reach out into forgotten corners”. — Genuineness. Commitment. Selflessness. — Willing to explain bits of the Bible I don’t understand without being judgemental. — Listened. They took an interest. — Reflecting Jesus Christ back to me in words and deed. — Passion, knowledge of the Bible, humanity, acceptance that they could not do everything. — Unafraid to show their humanity and care. — Always spoke of God as love – and showed it in practice. — Compassion and tolerance. — Honest. — Genuine joy in seeing, encouraging and nurturing the gifts of others. — Acknowledged their calling was much more than a paid job. — Approachable, facilitator, bridge-builder, encourager, teacher. — Loving. Supportive. Filled with the Holy Spirit. — Grace and openness to my transition. — Space for questions. Accepted that neither of us had all the answers. — Took me to the pub when I was going through a hard time. Saw the need to sit with me. — Encouraged music, children’s work and supported schools. — Had charisma, wisdom and sense of humour, engaged well with the community. — Could speak and explain; but didn’t have to. — Expressed and shared a humble but persistent trust in God. — Didn’t act the “professional” or claim to have all the answers. — Genuine, quiet commitment to Christ in the forgotten, downtrodden and oppressed. — The ability to help me believe in God’s love. — Their love. — Generous and kind. — Encouraged and celebrated people’s gifts. — Genuine passion for the gifts, talent and beauty of spirit in each and every person. — Gently guided, supported, and pushed me when needed, giving me freedom to try new things. — Deep and visible faith. — Helped people to grow into themselves and into Christ simultaneously. — Kindness. — Leads by example. — Gets involved with anything, at any level. — Excellent preacher. — Pastoral approach – from preaching to praying. — Deep awareness of, and appropriate honesty about, their own faults. — Catching fire when he preached.

**The Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull**