

## **'God Loves a Cheerful Giver' by Diocesan Secretary Jonathan Wood**

A couple of weeks ago my son Josh and I were in the stands at Trent Bridge, watching England try and take some wickets against New Zealand. It was day two and the game had ebbed and flowed in the way test cricket can. Jonny Bairstow began to field on the boundary and so Josh decided to sneak down and try and get him to sign his bat. He made his way round and crouched by the fence, and gently shouted to Jonny. The stand directly behind joined in and suddenly there was a loud shout of "Jonny". Now if I was playing test cricket - my focus would not be on a small child trying to get me to sign his bat. It would be on the match and the ball. But I don't. Jonny jumped over the boundary rope with a huge grin and signed the bat. In his excitement Josh backed away with his signed bat only for JB to shout 'your pen mate' and lobbed it back to him. That 10 secs of time he gave up made the world of difference to my 9-year-old. Jonny didn't make Josh feel like a nuisance or a pain, but instead that he was delighted to share a moment.

Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth talked about attitudes to giving. Now I am very familiar with his words in 2 Corinthians 9:7 – I am sure you are as well.

*'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'*

It's something I have heard all my life. But in that moment on a Saturday afternoon in Nottingham, I was reminded afresh of their truth. The choice that was made to be cheerful and not simply to appear as if it was a duty or obligation had an impact far wider than could have been known. It seemed to me that Jonny was having a far better time because he was enjoying the choice he made to engage. I think it must be the same for us. God loves a cheerful giver, so I have decided to be more Jonny. Perhaps you might like to also be more Jonny?