

Sunday 11 June 2017 - Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 40, 12-17,27 – end; 2 Corinthians 13.1-end; Matthew 28. 16-end

In the name of God, creator, redeemer, sustainer

This is Trinity Sunday, as well as, of course the Sunday after *that* election, ... It is a time to think about God – and to reflect on what we are called to do in this beautiful, complex and confusing world.

There has been so much hurt and pain in the world these past few weeks. Only a few months ago, Westminster.. barely two weeks ago Manchester, then last weekend London Bridge. And of course many other atrocities across the world. What a world we live in. What a world we bring up children in. For many non-religious people, the presence of such violence, and the consequent anguish and pain, is an argument against God. They see the world as a place without meaning – life, in Shakespeare's words, as 'a tale told by an idiot: full of sound and fury'. Philip Pullman in his novels suggests that the earth his characters inhabit is ruled over not so much by an idiot, but by an aged and despotic God – a God who is *not* the God that I worship...

But how do you picture God? God the unseeable – invisible – God the unknowable... God the ineffable (the one who can't be described in words).

Perhaps if words are no good, the images you hold in mind are drawn from art...

Most often we think of images of God in individual persons: God the creator reaching out to humanity in Adam, in Michaelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel; Caravaggio's picture of the disciples with Jesus breaking bread on the road to Emmaus; The picture by Salvador Dali – now in Glasgow – of Christ of St John of the Cross lifted high and overlooking the world ...

There is an altarpiece in the National Gallery painted between 1455-60, which seeks to portray the Trinity. It shows God the Father as a grey bearded old man, holding his crucified son – with the Holy Spirit as a dove above Christ... This picture though fails to do justice to

the dynamism – the love, the joy – and the life and light which must surely be held within the Trinity.

Maybe your images are formed by participation in nativities and passion plays – ordinary everyday people – children and adults - even people you know – portraying Christ and those around him.. Christ lived among us as an ordinary everyday human being. What makes a human being distinct? Relationships. Human beings engage with each other... our relationships rely on engaging with other people. God among us was, and remains, in relationship with us.. Relationship is part of God

There are two parts of our readings today to which I want particularly to draw your attention. The first is from the prophet Isaiah:

**V 31 those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.**

When we are exhausted by the pace and uncertainty and violence of life, worn down by change and challenge, we should ‘wait for the Lord’ – take time to pray, to hold all our anxieties and concerns up to God – and we shall be strengthened...

In our Gospel, the disciples – who had been in the depths of despair not long before as their world crumbled around them – glimpse the possibility that Jesus, their friend, is also God the Creator – is to be worshipped.. though some are unsure – and who would blame them? Jesus reassures them – and sends them – and us – out to make disciples – to share this good news – this amazing realisation –and to baptise all those with whom they share the story of God’s love.

Children are particularly good at noticing creation – the smallest ant, the brightest flower or sparkling drop of dew – and speaking out when they see dirt or damage. Creation reflects God the Creator in its beauty and abundance. Humankind is the ultimate creation, flawed

and fragile certainly, but full of beauty, from each cell to all the wealth of ideas and possibilities and love which are in each one of us, ready to be unlocked.

Jesus was born as a human baby: into poverty – under foreign occupation. He lived for a while as a refugee – and later as an itinerant teacher, dependent upon those around him for food and lodging. He listened to people around him – but also gave them insights into what God the creator wanted for them. Hope, justice, love. Meaning and purpose. He challenged powerful people to listen – but mostly they didn't - and he died painfully, with almost no friends nearby.. But through his willingness to accept suffering and death, the ordinary and apparently predictable was transformed. God - Love - overcame death.

God's Spirit was and is Love – which transformed and unlocked the disciples from their grief and fear.. Love brought hope to people who had been hopeless. Love inspired people to fight for justice. And love was at the heart of the willingness of homeless people and merchandisers to go to the help of injured strangers. The bravery of bakers, bankers, nurses and police in seeking to help and protect others. God is with us always.

In baptism, God calls each of us to recognise him at work in the world in creation, in other people and through love – to recognise him even in the worst moments. In baptism God transforms each of us, igniting all the ideas and possibilities within us, and energising us to build his Kingdom.

In the coming days, I pray that God will continue to sustain all of us, and inspire us with his love. Amen