

Trinity Sunday 2020

The Old Testament gets short shrift with quite a lot of people mainly because God comes out of it as some sort of powerful avenging Judge, who misses nothing and gets us for every possible mistake or wrongdoing. Some go so far as to say that we don't need the Old Testament now that we have the New. Well, today's first reading should certainly cause all of us to stop and think because of how Moses describes God. Let's hear what he said again – a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness. There is something both beautiful and extremely challenging here because they list some of the qualities so needed in our world today, and sadly so often absent as recent appalling events have shown.

I am referring to the brutal murder of George Floyd as the last ounce of breath was literally squeezed out of him as others looked on and did nothing, 9 minutes demonstrating anything but tenderness, compassion or kindness, rather of pent up anger and hatred for a person of different colour. Surely when those present as this so called arrest was taking place heard the words, 'I can't breathe' there must have been an emotional response? Wouldn't anyone go to the help of someone fighting for breath? And then the wider reaction which was swift and enduring, further acts of violence, blame and counter blame, fuelled by outrageous comments by some in high office who should know better and speak in a way that would quieten rather than fuel anger. At a time of pandemic, when so many lives have been lost, when the number of unemployed has escalated, when decisions of Governments are being questioned, the death of one black person by white police officers has not only been headline news world wide but opened old wounds and asking has anything changed for the better?

It is easy to point the finger from a distance, but the words Moses used to describe God challenge each and every one of us in our everyday lives. Where do I show kindness, for example, to the homeless person asking politely if I have any spare change? How can I show compassion to those who are living in refugee camps some the size of a small town. How do I both show and experience tenderness not only to those we love but to those who may never have known it. What causes me to blow a fuse?

You may be asking what has this to do with Trinity Sunday, to which I would reply, everything. This God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger and rich in kindness and faithfulness took on our human nature in the person of Jesus who came not to condemn the world but to save it, as we heard in the gospel, and who gave us the Holy Spirit to help us imitate his way of relating to others. As Denis McBride has written "None of the Trinity retires from the task of loving the world. God's love is sure and everlasting. As children of that one God we never grow out of the need of that love. Neither do we grow out of the responsibility of sharing it with others." That involves much more than pointing the finger of blame, it means being willing to search for a solution with tenderness, compassion and kindness and sometimes even being angry on behalf of those whose lives are blighted by poverty or a lack of human rights.

Bidding Prayers for the Feast of the Trinity

Celebrant:

As children of the Father revealed by the Son and inspired by the Spirit we ask now for some of our many needs.

Reader:

We pray for the Church founded by the Son and guided by the Spirit – that it will always encourage all its members to be full of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger and rich in kindness and faithfulness.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for world leaders – that they will be faithful to their responsibility of working for greater understanding between nations and within nations so that all people can live without fear and in peace.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for those who suffer as a result of prejudice or the abuse of power – that their suffering will end as those guilty of such attitudes experience the love of God and change their ways.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for those suffering from physical, mental or emotional pain – that they will be reassured by the love of God and the kindness and tenderness of family and friends.

Lord in your mercy

We pray for all those who have died, especially all victims of violence, accident, natural disaster and the coronavirus pandemic, for George Floyd who died recently and Jack Mundy, Tommy Cresham, Ann Cassidy, Edith Cox, Jack Poulter, Pat Mullan, Veronica Long and Nellie Wood whose anniversaries occur this week– that they and all who have died will see God revealed by Jesus as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Lord in your mercy

Either aloud or in silence we pray for our own special intention...pause...then

Lord in your mercy

We ask the prayers of Mary as we say, Hail Mary...

Celebrant:

God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness, Creator of all that is, Redeemer of the world, Sanctifier of your people, hear our prayers and grant what we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen