

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost XX The Illusion of Privilege and of any Expected Status Quo

The transitory nature of all achievements cries out for attention in the gospel for today at Mark 10:35-45. Jesus came to live out a new path. He offered very few new rules for human conduct. He questioned at some depth the motivations underlying explicit rules in the Tanach, the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the prescriptions of the Torah. This was a dangerous path and it was part of the highway of discontent with his approach that led to his execution. The girl in Pakistan shot in the head by the Taliban for promoting the education of girls is an example of rules of suppression gone mad. Why were they so afraid of her? What strange ideological ferment in the head of the coward who shot her made him think that he was serving God in such an utterly despicable act? Mistaking the rules for God's will has caused huge heartache and destruction in history and unspeakable cruelty. It has no doubt caused weeping in heaven. Christ cannot wipe away his tears for us, just as we cannot wipe away our tears for others. The biblical dream of "no more tears" has never been a reality on earth. **Christ is a fundamentalist's nightmare for any religion.** He condemns all forms of judgement, he loves his enemies and proves it with prayers for their forgiveness when he is fastened or nailed to the Cross. He touched the untouchable, supported a woman broken by adultery, and he broke a Jewish kinship expectation by leaving his mother in the care of a beloved friend from another family. He taught that love and forgiveness were the only remedies for hate; and he exemplified his own teaching that God is a loving God. Love was at the core of the heart of God for him. He said, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Jesus was totally immersed in the love of God. He saw human love as a pale imitation of God's love. Human love, even at its best, is not the love of God for him. Jesus encouraged human love with all his heart and spirit. He is for us the only person for whom the words Love, Spirit and Mind all come with a capital letter. We have ceased to use the pronouns he, his and him with a capital letter for him, but it is still in our mind. **The greatest despair of Christ was caused by his unlimited perception of the love of God and the vast indifference of humanity to its softening affects and its empowering focus and impetus towards compassion.** Love is costly. It is the most painful discovery for a teenager and even those who are "ancient of days" are not oblivious to its pain. Glory expands in God and it expands us when we walk into it. Human glory fades. It is a noble expectation that we will find some of the glory of God in this life. It is a foretaste of the glory to come, whether in

a realised eschatological drama at the end time, or in fulfilment of glimpses of the divine glory that we may see in this life. As Jesus reminded James and John, it does not convey privilege and power, but humility and awe in the presence of God. It is the great leveller. **We cannot define God but we can catch glimpses of the glory of God. What we cannot see we can experience. What we cannot define can envelop and define us.** Words fail. Glory takes over. Spirit comes in the Master's voice and absorbs our voice in a burst of praise that as in the waters of creation bursts the bounds of the universe and spills over. We never know everything in this life. But we can approximate it and revel in it with joy.

Christ's words are words of God for me. The stylised layers of the Gospels do not mute the authenticity of the words that break through. We rightly speak of "breaking open" the Gospels. It is not the inspiration of the Scripture, which is the flow of the Spirit through the configurations of the text for me, that ultimately convinces. Rather, it is the word of God because Jesus **is** his teaching; He is also a vastly different teacher whose words and meditations on God authenticate themselves by caressing our heart, stimulating our mind and refreshing our spirit. It is after all the Holy Spirit who "breaks open" the Gospels!

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Tuesday, Oct. 16

- Bible Study, 10am
- Group Discussion @ the Tutton's, 7:30pm.

Thursday, Oct. 19

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

- Isaiah 53:4-12
- Psalm 91
- Hebrews 4:12-16
- Mark 10:35-45