

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost 19 How Close Can We Get to God?

“Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name; bring an offering and come into his courts.

Worship the Lord in holy splendour; tremble before him, all the earth” (Psalm 96: 6, 8-9).

St. Paul gives us some of the defining moments of teaching in Christianity, and also some mystical moments in II Corinthians and other Pauline literature. The combination is fascinating and rarely explored in itself. The Psalmist cited here certainly went after it in the Jewish traditions. The medieval mystic who wrote *The Cloud of Unknowing* went after an inner closeness with God aligned to obedience to key doctrines. *The Cloud of Unknowing* is another name for the Mystery of God. The Shroud of Turin is famous, whether authentic or not. God is enshrouded in mystery and so is the person of Jesus. **He is the man no one fully understands who seems to fully understand us.** How do we plumb the mystery, “*The Cloud of Unknowing?*” The “Cloud” is a biblical symbol of God’s presence. It led the pilgrims of Israel in the wilderness by day; it enveloped Mt .Sinai to enshroud the presence of G-d; it overshadowed Mary and touched the Mountain of Transfiguration; it drew Christ into God at the Ascension. At times shot-through with eternal significance, the mystery opens its folds and becomes explicable for courageous explorers who venture interpretations.

How close can we get, in life and in death to the heart of God?

St. Augustine and many others tell us that the first step to loving God and others is to love ourselves. We are told by Jesus to love God, our neighbour and ourselves, but the actual process is not usually in that order. **We begin with ourselves. We are unique on the earth and no one like us will come after. That is scary perhaps, but it is true. We only find healing in recognising reality.** The ego necessarily directs traffic for us in the ways of life, but it is not our ultimate guide. It can lead to egocentrism, and self-indulgence. Loving others helps to balance the ego’s proper claims on us. **The only morality worth knowing is a morality of love that has its base in a sure and loving appreciation of oneself, others and God. Assured human love in oneself is the base for loving others and God.** Those who push hate in the name of God hate the God of love.

Spiritual grounding in love leads to purer intention which impels one to 'see' God. Loving affection for God opens our eyes to the wonder that deflects non-loving approaches. These are only some thoughts in a vast area of knowing and being known which opens up when we get closer to God. A child kneeling at a bedside can 'get' it, but we seem to lose the touch as adults. Touching such glory is the ultimate maturity of spirit. Much love in your endeavours.

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, October 22.

- Bible study, 10:00am
- Group discussion, 7:30pm, Parish office

Thursday, October 23.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel

NEXT SUNDAY'S READINGS:

Exodus 22:21-27; Psalm 1; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46

UPCOMING EVENTS:

November 9, Remembrance Sunday, 9:30am

November 16, NCCP Sunday, 9:30am

November 23, Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service & Dinner, 7:30pm
