

TRINITY NEWS

Pentecost VII Experience of “the Deep Things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10)

Ernest Hemingway’s last major writing was *The Old Man and the Sea*. I watched the movie as a young man and was riveted to the screen. It has some resonances with Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Both stories pit an old fisherman against the power of the sea and its inhabitants. But Hemingway’s story is far more convincing, at least for me. At the end the old man’s longed for prize catch of a great marlin lies on his home beach as a skeleton after the sharks have eaten its flesh. Coleridge’s poem has the old fisherman go home and he wakes up the next day, as the famous last lines go, “a sadder and a wiser man.”

The first great journey in the Bible is that of Noah and the Ark, looking for the destiny of humanity. This followed the brooding of the Spirit of God over the waters at Creation. The human journey has been tied to “the waters that cover the earth”. It has brought forth resonances from the depths of our own being. The blood that pelts through our own bodies is part of the flow of creation, and it is a little salty!

I saw an ancient fishing boat near Lake Galilee that had been preserved and slowly refurbished by being immersed in a special solution. It was about fifteen feet long and very sturdy in build to withstand the choppy waves and storms on the Lake.

The story of the storm on Lake Galilee at Mark 4:35-41 says so much in a few interlocked words. The serene and totally disengaged figure of Christ at rest is the calm centre at the “eye of the storm”, asleep on a cushion. The silent, inert figure soaks up the refreshing peace of God. Then, rested and now awake and fully engaged, he distils the peace that flows from God in order to calm the storm.

Then he challenges his disciples about their lack of trust and faith in his presence and his capacities to respond. What do we mean by "faith" and why do we allow fear to crush it, driving us out of our trust-centre, a centre that we profess to be grounded on faith in Christ? The definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 needs to be revisited from time to time: "The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living" (The Message). This is a clear translation of meaning from the Greek text of a classical statement about faith.

One of the most beautiful prayers ever written comes at the end of Psalm 139, "Search me out O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if I have a perverse way and lead me in the way of eternal life."

The person asleep with his head on a cushion in the boat as the storm broke knew how to plumb the depths of his "innermost essence of mind". When we have such a capacity we can engage it almost instantly when trouble strikes. Then we can enter the situation and bring a clear response that doesn't come from the situation but from within us. Inner peace leads to outer assurance and it is always available. A starry night at sea is a canopy of peace, But it can change suddenly like life itself and then we need both our outward and inner experiences to sustain us. As the Apostle Paul says, "Keep on doing the things you have learned and received..and the God of peace will be with you" (Philippians 4:9).

Bishop Arthur Jones

THIS WEEK:

Wednesday.

- Bible study, 10:00am.
- Group Discussion, 7:00pm, Parish Office

Thursday.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel.

Friday. Non-working holiday.

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Isaiah 57:14b-21; Psalm 22; Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:30-44
