

Sermon for 24.7.16

What a beautiful day it is for a Baptism. And that is exactly what we will be doing in the service today at All Saints church – I am baptising Gary Doven and Samantha Townsend and their family and friends and their parish family are here today to witness this wondrous step forward in faith that their lives are going to take.

Now as it happens in the epistle this morning Paul's speaks about our baptism and what takes place in our baptism.

As we know in the ritual of baptism we use water, oil and light to express the meaning of the sacrament.

Paul in the epistle this morning, takes us further into the reality of what the Sacrament of baptism means for us.

He writes, "you were buried with him in baptism and you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead".

Paul talks here about how through our baptism we are so very connected to Christ and that first Easter event, we actually partake in his crucifixion and also in his resurrection.

Our connectedness cannot go any deeper. Simply put, we are made one with him.

Such an understanding prompts Paul to remind us that through our union with Christ we can approach matters in the world from a more objective vantage point, while being compassionate and empathetic.

Paul is really talking here about our own self-awareness of our baptism and what it means to be in Christ and to live in that awareness of who we are in Christ.

And it is a key point in our Christian life.

Now I'd like to say a little about the meaning of the word awareness because as we know, to be aware of something, an object perhaps, means to have an alertness about it.

For instance if I had been more aware a couple of Sundays ago when I was backing my car out of the church car park I might not have backed into Julie's car.

In other instances there may well even be a goal to be achieved through our awareness.

For example, we may have better understanding of an attitude or a person through our awareness of the complexity within.

There is however a deeper meaning of awareness in the context of being aware of our union with Christ through our baptism.

It speaks really about a state of being. The meaning here isn't about an object and there is no goal to be achieved here either.

It is simply being in, and preserving a loving awareness of Christ within, as part of who we are.

The wonder of such a state of awareness, is that the more we knowingly live in our union with Christ, the less we focus on our own lack, or our faults or our inadequacies.

That is not to say that we live in denial of these, but in our union with Christ – our acute awareness of ourselves in the negative sense lessens, as it integrates with a more positive light.

It's a different understanding about how our lightness and our darkness find a positive light through integration and it is becoming a more inclusive and accepted way of thought in contemporary spirituality and Theology.

Thomas Merton, monk, mystic and theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century calls this way of being, *our hidden wholeness* in which our light and darkness are allowed and used by God.

It is what the apostle Paul means when he writes in Colossians that we are "hidden in Christ".

As we become more integrated, more wholesome, our vision in life, looks very different.

We see things with a broader vision – not just in black and white but also in softer shades of pastels.

Integral in our awareness of our union with Christ  
is our prayerful relationship with God.

The Old Testament reading today speaks about the need for intercession.

The main character in the story is Abraham, and the key value that is being taught is the value of intercessory prayer.

Jesus is making the same point in today's gospel.

Jesus is telling his disciples to pray to God, for the bread we need for today, for forgiveness and for protection.

The point of the parable is that we are to persist to persevere.

We are to ask, to seek and to knock.

We are being asked here, I believe, to consciously live our life in union with Christ which opens us up to receive the grace that is already and constantly being offered to each one of us.

This is the life of the Christian.

To live in such awareness of ourselves in Christ, which by its very nature destroys the illusion that we are in some way apart from God or separated from God.

Let us hold in our hearts each day of our lives the awareness of our union with Christ in the words of St Paul, *"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him,, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.... You were buried with him in baptism and you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God who raised him from the dead."* Colossians 2. 6-7;12.

The Lord be with you.