

Sermon for 17.6.18 Rev'd Jenny Simson - Grovely Parish

I would like to begin today by saying a little about the 6 day silent retreat that myself and a small group from our parish have recently made at the Mercy Centre at Bardon.

The purpose of the retreat is for retreatants to spend time in a quiet, safe environment that fosters openness to the interior journey with God.

The retreat organisers spend a great deal of time and love preparing an environment that accommodates the journey inward. Spiritual direction on a one to one basis is available every day to provide accompaniment and guidance along the way – it also gives one a chance to talk if you are desperate and need to.

Each morning of the retreat, there is an input session of around 1 hour 15 minutes that is presented by the retreat leader. Each input session is preceded by a time of contemplative prayer which settles and prepares the retreatants for what teaching is to come.

At the close of the sessions the day is free to contemplate the sacred interior journey and the natural world in the beautiful gardens and surrounds.

The afternoon comes with exercises that stretch and manipulate our physical bodies.

Contemplative prayer time follows, and then, in communion with God and each other we partake of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Our next communal prayer time at 7pm, closes the day and makes us ready to enter into the restful sleep of night.

During the input sessions this year we heard voices from the past centuries to the present day that spoke about how the nature of divine love is to flow outward and how in this perpetual outflowing of the love of the Trinity we and the creation are blessed with creativity, energy and life.

Now this sort of conversation can be a little foreign in our noisy, clangy, world today, yet I believe there remains a great desire for many of us to know how to live in a silence that enables us to get in touch with our heart mind wisdom, – or as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians, how to put on the *mind of Christ* –how to learn to respond to life's rough and tumble through that same wholeness and healing love of Christ.

In the Gospel reading today we hear two of the many parables that Jesus teaches about the kingdom of God.

In today's parables, about the growing seed and the mustard seed, Jesus reveals that God's kingdom is like the activity of a peasant. At the beginning of the agricultural season the peasant sows seed.

As the weeks and months pass , the daily routine of sleeping at night and working during day continues, while the seed at the same time sprouts and grows, and how this happens , the peasant does not know.

Jesus emphasis here is on the mystery of germination and growth, which is God's work, and which has nothing to do with the peasant.

Only at the end of the process, when at last the fruit allows – when it is ripe - is the peasant drawn into new involvement with what was initiated by the sowing of the seed; he sends for the sickle, for the harvest has come.

What this parable implies, is that there is mystery yes, but there is also a working oneness between God and humanity that produces the fullness of the crop – the fullness of life.

In the parable of the mustard seed we see that even when the smallest seed is sown, in the oneness of God and humanity, the greatest outcome can be achieved which includes care and provision for the natural world. Even the birds of the air will be provided for.

In the first reading from Samuel we glimpse this in the story of God and Samuel working together as one to anoint David as the new king of Israel.

In both the Gospel and the Old Testament readings, the interdependent activities between God and humanity eventually produce a harvest, the greatest of all shrubs that provides for the birds of the air, and a king of the land.

In the epistle this morning Paul reminds us that we are the new creation in Christ.

The Old ways have passed away and no long is it just a special one or two (like Samuel in the first reading), who live in communion with God – but through Christ we all are invited into this intimacy and in faith we can now live confidently as the new creation in Christ.

The KOG therefore is right here in the present time. Rather than being something that we die into, it is something that we awaken into.

Awaken into an awareness, a receptivity that as the new creation we are one in Christ.

That he is a part of us, as we are a part of him, rather than apart from him. That we live in the mutual indwelling presence in the love of the Trinity.

As Jesus tells us in Luke's gospel, the KOG is not a place over here or over there.

It is within you. And it is even more homely than our heart can imagine.

In this homely love may I encouraged you to take time in your prayer daily - sitting, waiting, listening for God's word or watching for his leading.

In the same love, may I encourage you to be intentionally in touch with the world around you, to notice, to love, to feel at one with it in care and nurture, as we are with each other.

To put on the mind of Christ is to see ourselves, our brothers and our sisters and the earth through Jesus Christ's healing eyes of love.

The Lord be with you.