

Advent at All Saints 2014

The theme for Advent 2014 at All Saints is “**At a cross-roads, beneath a river, atop a mountain, ‘walking through the valley of the shadow of death’, always in the palm of God’s Hand.**”

The sub themes emerged from my pastoral engagements with you. As Advent marks the beginning of the church’s yearly cycle that begins with the birth of Jesus, Advent also helps us prepare for the coming of Jesus again into our reality. Jesus comes to fix what is broken. But we have to tell Jesus what is broken. Jesus’ coming is new every morning but Jesus never makes assumptions about our needs are to which His coming is a direct response. It is expected that we will anticipate and expect something from Jesus: world peace and just inner peace or whatever breaks your heart and propels you into action. You see sometimes you are the broken one and sometimes you are Jesus, God’s anointed; the Messiah.

So the themes for Advent 2014 recognise that and come from my encounters with you and these are what we cry out for:

- ✦ A hand through the cross roads
- ✦ To be able to breathe under water when the sea comes calling
- ✦ The ability to climb up a mountain in order to get perspective, see the big picture
- ✦ The comforting rod and staff to comfort us through the valley of the shadow of death
- ✦ For God always to hold us in the palm of God’s hand

That is what we said we long for! That would satisfy our hearts and would be sufficient nourishment for the journey we were on.

Here’s the cliché restated again: we are on a journey! I know you have heard it once too often. But that is what it is: we are on a path and we are moving but hopefully we are also growing and growing into the full stature of Christ himself. Remember that “God became man in order that man may become God”. So whatever else we are doing we are growing into becoming our Godselfes. And these sub themes which have emerged from being with you are your requirements for the next phase of the journey.

But we are also moving from one degree of Glory to the next and we are revealing increasing levels of God’s love to ourselves and others as we open ourselves to that love. So we are opening ourselves; making ourselves vulnerable in order to receive God’s love. Well if we aren’t, then we should be hence our five sub-themes.

It was though in the throes of this journey that I come to realise that journeys can be wonderfully joyful and yet equally toxic. I realised that just because it looked and felt like we were moving didn’t mean that we were moving into God. On the contrary we might well be moving into hell and closer to its custodian. How were we to distinguish the respective journeys and choose our trajectory or path correctly? Well in the end it appears obvious though it isn’t really. Actually there is only one path and one journey but there are, confusingly, two possible outcomes even though we arrive at the same end point. What determines how the endpoint looks for each of us is the degree to which we have

acknowledged and paid attention to that thorn in the flesh of humanity: OUR RAGE!

The greatest delusion is to walk around believing that you are not overcome by rage. In fact in your ignorance or unwillingness to embrace your rage, you wreak havoc on the world around you. You and I are repositories of rage and when we concede that this is true then we begin to redeem it.

The journey and its sub themes are only as helpful as our willingness to be "*unenraged*" [another word that I have invented for you 😊]. We can ensure that the movement into God is exactly that by dealing with the rage.

Thus my Advent mission in 2014 is precisely to make you aware of and then to assist you in the process of "*disenraging*" [another new word, I can't stop myself!] I am thus inviting all All Sainters past and present to join me on Sunday morning the 14th of Dec 2014 at either service [7.30 or 9am] on the eve of Reconciliation day to participate in an act of love and faith and glory and mystery and God and redemption of all that is not of God. I shall be waiting for you at the confluence of the cross roads, beneath the sea, atop the mountain, the valley of the shadow of death and the palm of God's hand from whence, having waited upon the Lord, we shall mount up on eagle's wings into a place free of rage.

I do pray that I will see you all again even if it is just this once so that nothing may hinder the rise of Christ in you and me and that we may renew the face of the earth which is our calling. A prayer: May your Kingdom come Lord and may it begin with me dealing with my rage and seeking the redemption of my rage that hinders everything and even turns heaven's door into the gate of hell. Bless Sunday and may it be all that it can and must be.

God loves us so comprehensively and unconditionally and that's why I am able to love you in the same way. Please come and receive a blessing on Sunday from the ones who love you. Selah. I do this in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit

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