



**DURHAM
CATHEDRAL**

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

Praying Together

during the week beginning Sunday 9 May 2021

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

During this time of anxiety and uncertainty, we want to stay in touch with our regular worshippers and indeed with everyone who is associated with the cathedral family. Worshippers may attend the daily services of Morning and Evening Prayer as well as the daily Eucharist at 12.30 p.m. and may book to attend the two celebrations of the Eucharist on Sunday as well as Sunday Evensong at 3.30 p.m. (without booking).

Durham Cathedral is also still open for private prayer and quiet reflection. If you'd like to come to the Cathedral for services and for prayer, there are some important measures we'd like you to know about, to ensure the safety of members of the public and staff. You can find this information on our website: www.durhamcathedral.co.uk We will continue to live stream services as well so that you will still be able to engage with us online.

Gospel

John 15. 9-17

Jesus said, As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

Thought for the Day

by the Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

Marilyn Judith Grove is probably not a familiar name. Born in Auckland, New Zealand, at nineteen she set off to travel the world and met and fell in love with an Italian in the USA. In their correspondence she often included a small cartoon. These were motifs of the two of them under a two-word phrase. They were to marry and by her penname Kim she saw these cartoons shared worldwide from 1970 onwards. The two words above each image being. "Love is..." So popular were the cartoons that in the 1970s they were earning her around £4 million pounds a year.

They might not be my taste, but Kim sought to find examples of how to define love that resonated with so many people. Through her cartoons, newspapers the world over had a small picture that positively defined Love.

Christians often reach for St Paul's definition of Love in 1 Corinthians 13. "Patient, Kind, Long suffering." I would often give this to couples preparing for marriage and ask them to insert their own name where it said love. If they found it jarred or amusing then that maybe was an area to work on in their lives. "Michael is patient, Michael is kind, Long suffering, Michael is slow to anger..." 1 John 4:8 gives a simple definition that "God is Love." Thus, when we demonstrate love, we demonstrate that which is of God.

My question is what do we mean by this? It is hard to avoid in analysis removing anything that seems to be actually of love. (To pin a butterfly down is to kill it.) Richard Dawkins book "A Devil's Chaplain" ends with a beautiful, yet painful letter where he writes to his daughter Juliet. He exhorts her to explore and challenge. It exudes love, but fights shy of naming it. It raised for me the further question that if we have a Godless world, do we also then have a loveless one?

Returning to marriage preparation classes, I would often challenge a mechanistic approach to life by exploring the couple's experience of love. Humanity's experience of love is that goes beyond that which reasonably can be expected. It is a universal experience and yet is hard to define or accept. The naïve cartoons of Kim resonated because they showed the vulnerability involved in love and that is both in the declaring of it towards another and also in discovering it.

St Augustine in his writing on the Trinity reached out for many interactions to show how God could be both three and one and following on from “God is love” in God as trinity we have “the lover, the beloved and love” The Father and the Son as lover and beloved share in the dynamic of Spirit that is love.

To hold onto this image and then to abide in it is to be immersed into the very heart, mystery and dynamic of God.

By its very nature, love cannot be contained or limited, and Jesus articulates that love drives beyond pure sentiment into action and commitment, and that this commitment if of love is total, even to the point of death. Love is not a commodity that is used and consumed, or experimented with and discarded. This is why we are called to abide. This is not an easy option, if there would not need to be the full exploration of it that we heard this morning.

St Benedict would not have had to emphasize “stability” within his rule. Abiding in love involves a transformation of ourselves because we are grafted into the rootstock of the one who gives us life. What then is produced by us shows where we are, and for this to happen, we are not dry sticks blowing in the wind, but green branches grafted in. To graft a branch into a rootstock involves opening up a wound, and placing permanently the new branch into that cut, for it then to share in its life.

Our involvement in true love therefore involves the wounds of God, the giving of God and puts us totally into a new definition of being in God.

One of Richard Dawkins and other’s challenges is “Where is the evidence of this living in love?” If we are called to abide in God, to be grafted into the body of Christ and bear his fruits that we celebrate; does this happen?

All too often what we seek of God is not love, but power. All too often what we show is not a self-giving nature as shown in Jesus, even to death, but a seeking to possess and control. We try to reverse the process of grafting and turn the rootstock to reflect the branches. If we turn away from love, ultimately, we are turning away from God, and are no longer abiding in him. And Jesus gives a very stark warning to what that really means.

Today is Rogation Sunday, the day when we ask God for his blessings on who we are and what we do. We seek to encapsulate the whole of our life and ask God to hallow it. If we abide in him, if we are placed in the flow of love between the Father

and the Son within the power of the Spirit. If we allow ourselves to be changed by that experience then our requests become ones rooted in love and seeking that for all around us. For sadly there is much that we experience and know that does not show love or enhance life or speak of that which is beyond a brutal existence. To be in the love which is God, is to seek to enable others to also be in the love that we know.

Kim's simple cartoons grappled with the complexities of love, through seeking to respond to the phrase Love is... If we are truly abiding in God then we will, ourselves be demonstrations of that to the world. Amen.

A Form of Intercession

Gracious God, fountain of all wisdom,
we pray for all Christian people;
for Paul, our Bishop, and Sarah, Bishop of Jarrow,
for all Christian leaders,
and for those who teach and guard the faith.
May the word of Christ dwell richly in our hearts,
and knit us together in the bond of your love.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the leaders of the nations,
and for those in authority under them,
for those elected to serve their people on Thursday,
for the people of India
at this time of extreme anxiety concerning the coronavirus,
for your wisdom and your strength.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for Durham and for the towns and villages
from which we come,
for those who live and work in those places,
and for those who visit the Cathedral this coming week.

Speak your word of peace in our midst,
and help us to serve one another as Christ has served us.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who do not believe,
and yet who long to know you, the very Word of life.
Open their ears to hear your voice,
and open their hearts to the knowledge
of your love in Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for those bowed down with grief,
fear or sickness,
especially those known to us and whom we name in our hearts.
May your living Word bring comfort and healing
to all those in need.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We give thanks for all those who have died in the
faith of Christ, especially Richard Lloyd,
a great servant of this holy place
and a skilled exponent of your gift of music, laid to rest on Friday,
and we rejoice with Cuthbert, Bede and all your saints,
trusting in the promise of your word fulfilled.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Hymn

Come, ye faithful, raise the anthem,
 Cleave the skies with shouts of praise;
Sing to him who found the ransom,
 Ancient of eternal days,
God eternal, Word incarnate,
 Whom the heaven of heaven obeys.

Ere he raised the lofty mountains,
 Formed the sea, or built the sky,
Love eternal, free, and boundless,
 Forced the Lord of life to die,
Lifted up the Prince of princes
 On the throne of Calvary.

Now on those eternal mountains
 Stands the sapphire throne, all bright,
With the ceaseless alleluyas
 Which they raise, the sons of light;
Sion's people tell his praises,
 Victor after hard-won fight.

Bring your harps, and bring your incense,
 Sweep the string and pour the lay;
Let the earth proclaim his wonders,
 King of that celestial day;
He the Lamb once slain is worthy,
 Who was dead, and lives for ay.

Laud and honour to the Father,
 Laud and honour to the Son,
Laud and honour to the Spirit,
 Ever Three and ever One,
One in love, and One in splendour,
 While unending ages run. Amen.

Job Hupton and J M Neale

Calendar of Holy Days

Monday 10 May Rogation Day

Tuesday 11 May Rogation Day

Wednesday 12 May Rogation Day

Gregory Dix, Priest, Monk, Scholar, 1952

THURSDAY 13 MAY ASCENSION DAY*

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ
to have ascended into the heavens,
so we in heart and mind may also ascend
and with him continually dwell;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Friday 14 May Matthias the Apostle

Almighty God,
who in the place of the traitor Judas
chose your faithful servant Matthias
to be of the number of the Twelve:
preserve your Church from false apostles
and, by the ministry of faithful pastors and teachers,
keep us steadfast in your truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

***Sung Eucharist for Ascension Day on Thursday 13 May at 5.15 p.m. in church and online.**

A Prayer for use during the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer of William Tyndale following last week's elections

Almighty God,
whose is the eternal only power,
and other men's power but borrowed of thee:
we beseech thee for all those who hold office
that, holding it first from thee,
they may use it for the general good
and to thine honour:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Contact details for The Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

Address: 15 The College, Durham, DH1 3EQ
Email: michael.everitt@durhamcathedral.co.uk
Telephone: 0191 384 0164

The next issue of *Praying Together*
will be published on Monday 17 May