

ST MATTHEWS

'IN TOUCH'

A PALM SUNDAY REFLECTION

Ecclesiastes 3 A Time for Everything

- 3** There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- <sup>2</sup> a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
  - <sup>3</sup> a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,
  - <sup>4</sup> a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
  - <sup>5</sup> a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
  - <sup>6</sup> a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
  - <sup>7</sup> a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
  - <sup>8</sup> a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

This Old Testament wisdom is very pertinent at the present time as life has thrown up this extraordinary health challenge. From what I have heard, people can't help but ask pertinent questions? We puzzle over that darker side of life, suffering, injustice and misfortune. The simple picture of a God who pulls the levers of good times and bad times is far too simple to be taken seriously.

Creation is a highly complex and dynamic display of life's wonders. The day turns to night then returns to day, the seasons rotate, the tide comes in then out only to return again, people age and are replaced by a new generation and the life cycle progresses. This fluctuation seems to serve many purposes. It refreshes and renews life and sees it evolve to newer forms. More pointedly it is our home within which we grow and mature and develop the gifts we have been given.

Christians believe there is a Godly purpose to this dynamic nature, most importantly we grow and mature in faith and trust, love and care in our journey toward Christlikeness. We must walk our own journey but we never walk alone. At this stage we must self isolate but then all are 'in it together'.

Nothing is stagnant, never the same. As a yacht on the sea must continue to sail whether in storm or on a calm ocean so our daily walk with Christ will encounter a myriad of different circumstances from joy to sorry.

Palm Sunday echoes this variable life. At one time the crowd is jubilant in Jesus arrival yet before long it has turned against him. People themselves are diverse and fluid. We fluctuate from mood to mood, opinion to opinion, from energetic to exhausted, from confusion to insightful. We must manage the fluid nature of human experience, but this in itself seems to be a vital condition of the purpose of life. We could say that God is the great sculptor with the wonder of creation as his tool of work fulfilling his purposes of love for all his creatures.

Even in this challenging time we are not alone for the Lord is with us holding us in his creative hands.

### SPACIAL DISTANCING

Last Sunday I was reminded of a story my Bishop in Canada shared with the church congregation. He described a picture of the time rural people were connected by the one telephone service which was referred to as a party line. People could listen to others on the phone should they be so bold. Of course, they did regularly. The Bishop told the story of one family whose child was taken to hospital and the phone call from the hospital outlined the condition. Without a pause people from that community on different phones immediately spoke up and offered things they could do to help. It was as if they were all in the same room having heard the message.

Rather than highlighting the negative nature of this ‘nosey’ behaviour, he preferred to call it a lower form of the communion of saints.

On our last Sunday of worship standing at the front of the church it was an interesting picture to see the congregation spread across the church a few metres apart from each other. Rather than a fragmented group it was as if I was able to see our community at a different level. Our connection was more shaped by our common purpose. We are people of spirit and while we don’t readily see this nature of our gathering it is very real. We declare in our worship, ‘We are one in Spirit’.

Over the coming months we will be spread far further apart, but we are people who have been worshiping regularly, many for many years. This spiritual foundation is solid. So in the physical isolation of this time never forget that we are truly one in spirit. Pray for one another and know that in our prayers for the wider world we are doing so with one another and if the truth be known as our scripture says amidst a ‘great cloud of witnesses’.

### ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL, SOME EXTRA SUPPORT

On a more apparent level. I know that many are able to keep in touch with others by phone but if you are in a position of being without contact do not hesitate to call me on 0408583205

Fr Geoff