

Notes on 'Practising Resurrection'

'The Community of the Resurrection'

As part of my sabbatical, I stayed for five days at the Community of the Resurrection. This community is a Church of England monastic community devoted to prayer and worship and I thoroughly enjoyed my time there. This Community was founded by Bishop Charles Gore in Oxford in 1892 and when I was asked my name I said, 'You can call me Charles Gore if you like, though I usually answer to Andy!!'

The heart of this Community is their church, which is built from stone quarried from their own grounds and the heart of this building is the



Resurrection Chapel and its altar. The altar is a cube and on its four faces there are carved four stories which seek to touch our hearts, our minds and our souls as we think of Jesus, his resurrection and how this is to shape and mould us in our lives as his people.

At the rear of the altar is this carving of the empty tomb, with the stone rolled away and it imitates the medieval practice of having an Easter sepulchre within the church to remind us that the resurrection is the heart of our faith. In our building we remind ourselves of this by the empty cross on the wall which speaks of Jesus who both died and was raised for us. We remind ourselves that by his death he has destroyed the power of sin and in his being raised to life again, we are to know his resurrection life within us.

'The Story of the Resurrection'

All four gospels tell of the women going to the tomb where they met angels who both terrified them as well as gave them a message to tell the other disciples. We find this in Matthew 28 : 5 - 8; Mark 16 : 6 - 7; Luke 24 : 5 - 8 and John 20 : 13. The message they give to



these women is the Good News of sins forgiven, the new Covenant, a heart of flesh and not of stone, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the possibility of living a new life, becoming a new person and having a new hope within us. The four Gospels tell us this story that we may immerse ourselves in it again and again and to know it deep within ourselves as the foundation of our lives. Do you know this for yourself? Do you live it? Do you rejoice in it?

Are you excited and animated by it? Do you wake up in the morning amazed by it? Judging by the women's responses I think we can safely say that they certainly did!!

'The Meal of the Resurrection'

This carving speaks of the supper at Emmaus where we not only see the two disciples, but we also see all of us looking on from the background. In the story in Luke 24, we are told that when Jesus broke the bread, suddenly the eyes of the two disciples were opened and



they recognised who was with them. They recognised who had set their hearts aflame as he retold the Bible's story of why it was necessary for the Messiah to die and be raised to life.

As people of the Resurrection, we are to be defined by two things. The first is that we are a people who worship as the Family of God. We do this so that all our hearts might burn within us as we hear again the old, old story of Jesus and his love. This is why we are here and this is why I am here. I pray for myself and I pray for us that as we worship we be inspired, helped, guided and refreshed to live the new life which Jesus gives to us.

'The Mission of the Resurrection'

In John 21 we are told the story of a miraculous catch of the 153 fish; you can tell it was a fisherman who told the story as he thought this detail was important to the story!! This is the backdrop to Jesus' reinstating of Peter after his denial of him earlier in the Gospel. This reinstatement was Jesus' fresh call on Peter's life to love



and to serve him and it was my ordination text way, way back in 1991. This text has shaped and defined me as a Pastor and this was deeply reaffirmed to me in my time away on Sabbatical. But this text is not just for me, as Jesus calls all of us to participate in his Resurrection mission by how we live out his new life, as we show to all how this new life transforms our world of work, rest and play and animating us to invite all who we meet to enter into this new Resurrection life for themselves.