

Newsletter and Reflection Sunday 30th August 2020

Sunday's Readings: Exodus 3.1-15; Matt. 16.21-end.

Reflection by Claire

TS Elliot once wrote, 'We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time'. As we reach the end of August, we may feel like we have hit another milestone. Schools and Universities will soon be going back to class. There is a sense that whilst everything is still very uncertain, we are moving forward and entering a different phase. Our church communities will soon be back to worshipping regularly on a Sunday morning. I wonder how your experience has been of beginning again with visiting familiar places, going back to church, to a café. Whilst the place is familiar in many ways because of the situation we are in everything also feels unfamiliar, different, changed.

There are different levels of awareness that we have in life. I often refer to life and our experiences as being like the layers of an onion. We can find ourselves on familiar territory but in a completely different place, like peeling back the layers of an onion. As we start to meet together again we will begin to notice that there has been a change in us. Each of us will have been on a different journey over the last few months and the experiences will have changed us in some way. As churches we will need time to adjust and find our feet again as we begin to relate to each other and find our own place within the body of Christ.

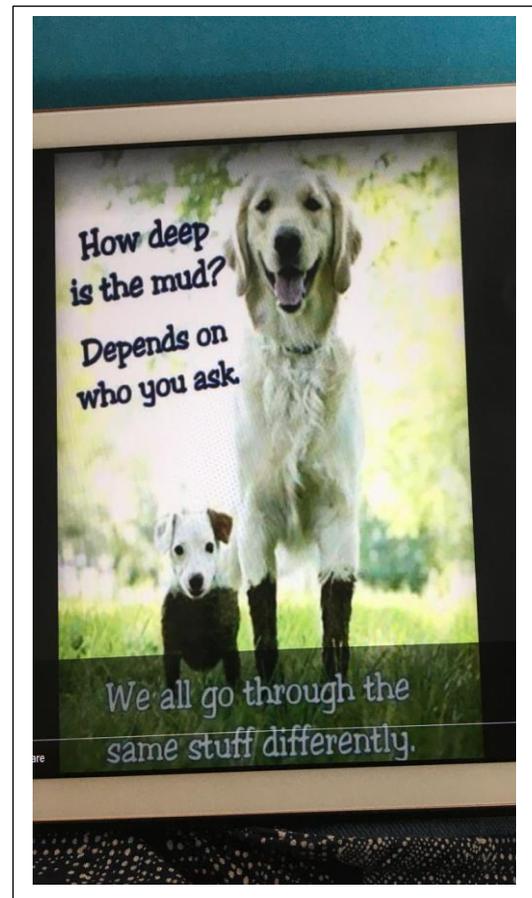
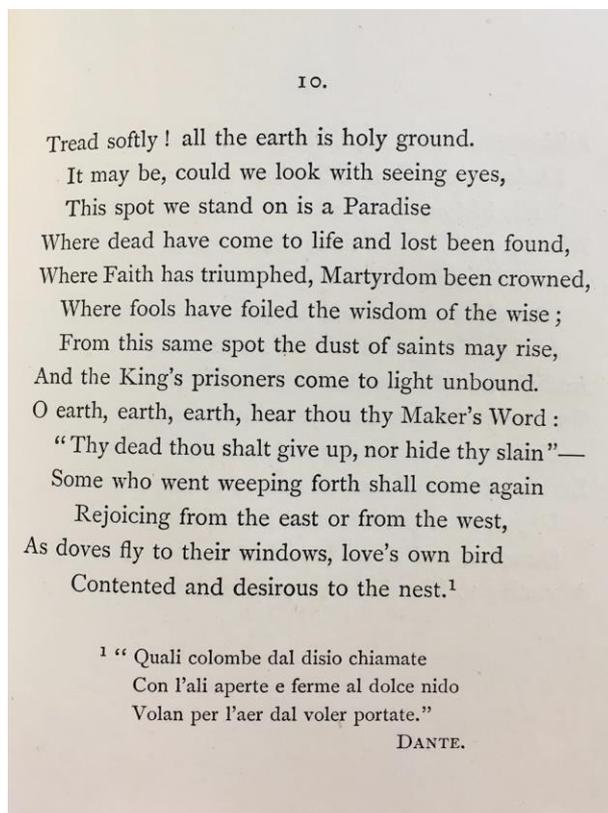
Our relationships with each other are important. As it is through these that we are able to find ourselves, and the relationships within our church communities help us to find ourselves as beloved children of God. Whilst we can have an individual faith and relationship with God, we need others in order to become church and to be the living expression of the body of Christ.

The peeling of the layers of the onion is paralleled to Moses turning aside to the burning bush (Exodus 3.1-15). To noticing God's presence as a sign and companion with us on our journey. It is as we turn aside from our human understanding towards the deeper and more challenging wisdom of God that we begin to feel a sense of reassurance. That we may begin to know the place where we are standing for the first time.

The seasons will continue to change around us and the winds of Covid will be strong throughout the autumn and winter months ahead of us. Buffeting us and changing and challenging our plans and the way we live. What will hold us together is being able to collectively find our still point, our burning bush, so that we can experience at the core of our being the touch and presence of the living God. As we meet together there is something which occurs beyond us an individual. We are in communion with each other and in communion with the Divine. We are held in a loving embrace of God and of God's people.

So, as we move into autumn and as schools and churches being again, we may find that the familiar is very unfamiliar and everything doesn't quite feel like it used to. However, if we allow ourselves to turn aside to the burning bush and to have the courage to peel back the layers of the onion of our own souls we will also find that church is where we can truly find ourselves. After all of our

exploring over these past months of lockdown we will find the place the place where we are standing is holy ground.



Collect for this Sunday

**God of constant mercy, who sent your Son to save us:
Remind us of your goodness, increase your grace within us,
That our thankfulness may grow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Notices

Church Services for September: Sunday 13th and Sunday 27th @ 10.30am

St Mary's Church please remember you need to book at seat!!! Take time to read the information sheet which should have been sent out to you.

This will be the last reflection/newsletter in this format. September marks a change in season and we will be focusing on getting back together in person for worship.

Please remember Revd Dr Ela Hall in your prayers as she prepares for her ordination to priesthood on Saturday 26th September in Sheffield Cathedral. It will be a different kind of ordination experience with social distancing and only 7 guests allowed!

Roots resources, prayers and reflections for adults, families and children for each Sunday
<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/i-am-looking-for/public-copies/worshipathome30aug>

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