

Reflection for 14th July

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.” (Hebrews 11, v.1)

We live by faith in so many ways. What do you expect will happen when you press a light switch? You expect the light to shine because you believe that switch is connected to an electricity supply. Can you see electricity? Can you touch it or taste it or smell it? Of course not, you must be thinking. But you act on the faith that electricity is the unseen power that is accessed by that switch to turn your light on. I could fill a small book with numerous similar examples of how we live so much of our modern world lives by faith.

Should we not have stronger faith in the God who created us, who sent his only Son to die for us than we do in electricity?

We say “We believe in God the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth”. Then why are we afraid of so many things, and in particular of Covid 19, or even death? John tells us that “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.” (1 John 4, v.18)

In times of uncertainty it is easy to be made afraid by the things we read and hear in newspapers and on TV or social media. Too many negative statistics create fear, and fear is the opposite of faith. Many Christians down the ages, and in many parts of the world today, are facing martyrdom without fear because they are strong in faith. Faith in the God who created and redeemed us, who gave us life and supports life, and who has promised us eternal life with Him.

Slowly we are coming out of lockdown to a changed world. We have learnt new ways of being the church online and outside. Many have rediscovered the natural world and come closer to God through really seeing the beauty of created things. Some years ago I took evening classes to get a GCSE in Art. Our teacher said to us one night “Learn to see what you are looking at.” A few days later I was visiting in the parish and as I stood on a doorstep ringing the bell I noticed a small fir tree in the lady’s border. I thought “last week I would have looked at that and said it’s a dark green miniature fir tree, but looking at it today I can count five different shades of green and dark blue in its foliage”. I was really seeing what I was looking at.

Last Friday Kay reminded us of how Jesus told us to consider the flowers in the fields and how beautiful they are, more beautiful even than King Solomon in all his royal splendour. God cares for the lilies of the field. Look at a flower petal. What do you see? Look at the detail: could a painter reproduce that? If you have a microscope look at the detail in an insect’s wing.

Let the little things remind you of the greatest of all.

“He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress. My God, in whom I trust.” (Psalm 91, v. 1&2)

So let us all look forward in hope and faith whatever the post lockdown world holds for us, with a song in our hearts.

Fight the good fight with all thy might;
Christ is thy strength, and Christ thy right;
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.

Faint not nor fear, his arms are near;
He changeth not, and thou art dear;
Only believe, and thou shalt see
That Christ is all in all to thee.

J.S.B. Monsell (1811-1875)