

This past week has been an interesting one for me. I was at the Diocesan clergy conference, where we had a wide-ranging and thoughtful discussion. We shared our journeys of God with each other. We studied scriptures. We prayed. We asked some big questions like: “Why does God have us here?” “What is God's mission, and how does He want to involve us?” “What is the best way for us to follow God's desires, in our Diocese?”

Jesus wants us to walk with Him in repairing the breach between ourselves and God. When we truly do that, we become like Jesus: we ourselves become anointed to repairing the breach between God and Humanity. In effect, to quote C.S. Lewis, a famous English writer, we become 'Little Christ's' – i.e., little Anointed Ones.

God wants me, under the direction of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, to be an Anointed One. God wants you, under the direction of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, to be an Anointed One. He wants that for this Parish. He wants it for every single person He created, for everyone, whether they realize it or not, is an Image of God. And He wishes to repair everyone of His Images. He wants the entire population of humanity to be Anointed, to repair their breach with Him. And most people don't want this!

This means we need to fully be disciples of Jesus. This means we need to mentor each other in Christ-like-ness. This means we need to model Christly behaviour.

I struggle with this, because I know just how imperfect I am. I think: “Who am I to be anointed to repair the breach between God and individuals, when I myself am so broken?” I first heard this illustration on an Alpha course, but for this purpose it fits: did you ever have a spot of the wall where your parents would measure your height, or you would measure your children's height? And then over time you could see how you were growing? Imagine there's one on the side of the church. Instead of height, let's measure 'holiness.' Now, where would you put Adolph Hitler – pretty well near the bottom I suspect. And possibly Joseph Stalin. Now, where would you put Mother Teresa? Saint Francis? Saint Paul and Saint Peter? Near the top? How about me and you? Somewhere near the middle?

Say we put Mother Teresa at the top, just for arguments' sake – say, at the 2 metre or 6-foot spot. Now, where would you put God? Well, God would be kilometres high. In fact, God would be so high that when He looked down, He could legitimately say “You know, from my angle I don't really see any difference between any of you...” We all have original sin, the desire to be our own god. We all have pride, prejudice, unbelief, etc. And in Jesus, God calls us to be at HIS height – way, way, way up there.

Paul was right in his discussion with the Athenians – God IS unknowable. He is so far beyond us we can barely comprehend Him. However, in Christ we have the revelation of God – in Christ, God becomes known to us. Paul was also right that God calls everyone to a life from repentance, for a judgement day is coming, a day which each of us will encounter, a day which all people will encounter.

And quite frankly, we don't measure up. But as the Psalmist says, God has kept us among the living, for God does not remove His steadfast love from us. Christ suffered for us, died for us, to bring us to God the Father. Christ now rules, so let us, each one, sanctify in our hearts that Christ is Lord – Lord over our very lives, that He rules everything about us. Let us realize, with gentleness and reverence and humility, that we are broken people, brought together by the love of Christ – and that this healing from broken-ness is available, freely, to everyone.

Let us realize all it means to say “Christ is in the Father, Christ is in us, we are in Christ.” And let us

keep Christ's commandments in our love for Him.

I can't heal my sin, my separation from God. No one can heal their own sin. But God can. God can! No matter how much we try, we fail for we are weak. In coming to God though, repentant and eager, we are forgiven, we are resurrected, we are saved. And, in that striving, in that trying, we end up modelling behaviour – we all model behaviour by what we say and do. And so even if in good conscience we know we need to work on myself first, God can use even the things we do to influence others.

We can read the Bible daily. Please do so. We can pray all the time. Please do so. We can journal (make notes) daily. In doing these things, God changes us. And others notice what we do, what we say, often without us realizing. And they are influenced by us. If we are truly transparent, living our lives with integrity as much as possible, others see our lives – they see we are not perfect, but that we are repentant, and in our repentance we receive life. They see that we all have original sin, each and everyone, that we are no better than anyone else, but that we also have received Mercy – and the way they know that, is because we give Mercy. **We are the mercy people**, for we of all people have received mercy. Though we cannot heal ourselves from our sin, we can change our behaviour to love like Christ, to be like Christ, to live like Christ – and when we change our behaviour to turn from our sinful actions, God is honoured. And we do receive healing – not by our own power, but through the Holy Spirit.

We, our community, can be a huge influence. If we individually strive for the will to follow God's will with all our heart, and if we join together in support to care for each other in our journey – a miraculous thing happens. We find community, we find care, we find love, we find God.

Paul spoke to the Romans about “the unknown God.” Truly, God is an unknowable God – He is so wonderful, so far above us, so righteous, so EVERYTHING – that there is truly no way for us to grasp it. And, Paul was correct that our unknowable God commands people everywhere to repent – for life and death are in the balance, literally, and God wants us to choose life.

It starts with each one of us as individuals. This is one of those rare times you can truly say “It's all about me.” You need to, we need to, I need to: allow God to repair us. Not ME repair myself – God. Truly, we all need each others' help – for we are all broken.

In our repentance from our broken-ness, God asks us to walk with Him in repairing the breach – repairing the separation between all of humanity and Him. If you see something that is not Godly, ask Jesus what He would do. Ask Jesus what He would have YOU do – and then try it, in gentleness and reverence. Always start with prayer. And, I suggest, always start with yourself. We don't want to be the person that Jesus was talking about when He said we try to take the speck out of our neighbours' eye while ignoring the log in our own! Walk in love. Let us care, and let us forgive. Let us not walk up to someone and say “I know what your problem is!” -- and then tell them in no uncertain terms. No. But in our vulnerability, in our knowing that we are all sinful yet all under Christ, let us care without fear. We are all adopted into Christ's family. We are all broken in our sin, and only open to God's love through His grace. Remember: we are the Mercy People.

The Lord intends ordinary means of grace to be the path of salvation. Those ordinary means of grace include you. As we walk with Christ, and continue to strive for this, we find miraculously that not only are we changed, but so is our community. As our community becomes vulnerable and sharing and caring, not pretending to “have it all together” but grateful that God overwhelms repentant sin with

love, we find miraculously that the world changes.

It won't be easy. It probably won't be pleasant – these things have a way of spilling out all over the place. The unfortunate thing is, the world doesn't actually want to be saved! When we have Christ as our ruler, we automatically set ourselves against the world – and it engages in battle. This is war. That is why we need each other. Just as a country would not send a single person in to fight a war, Christ does not send a single person to fight His war – He sends His bride, His church: us. We need to pray for each other. We need to help each other, even in our broken-ness. It won't be easy, but it will be life-giving. I am going to pray a dangerous prayer, so I ask you to consider carefully.

If you wish also to be as close to God as possible, pray this:

Christ, come into me. Be Lord over my life, over everything about me. Fulfill your will in me today, and have me realize You are doing so. Anoint me to repairing the breach between God and Humanity, with you. You are in me, and I am in You. As you are real, show me in a way that I'll understand and see that it is You. Amen.

Jesus said: “I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. You will see me; because I live, you will live too. You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you. The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.”

Let us love, in Christ. Amen.