

Reflection for Tuesday of 2nd Week of Easter 2020

Today is the feast of St Anselm who was Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109. He was a Benedictine and a noted theologian and philosopher who worked hard to keep the Church in line with Rome, suffering two periods of exile for his pains.

In the Acts of the Apostles we are told how the early Christian community shared everything. Isn't it ironic that something similar is happening today because of the lockdown? Many supermarkets are more readily distributing left over food to be given to the poor. The support for the NHS services through the heroism of a 100year old Captain Tom Moore has led to many people sharing their wealth so that people can be healed from Covid 19. We in the presbytery have received goods and offerings from many parishioners for which we are deeply grateful; to name but a few. The spirit of that first Christian community is alive and well.

Jesus reminds us, today, of the importance of sight, not so much with the eyes but with our hearts and our faith. This kind of seeing goes beyond knowledge and understanding and even wisdom. This sight, which is a most precious gift of the Holy Spirit, enables us to see the things that lie beyond the rational and the obvious, to see the presence of God. The encounter of Thomas with Jesus last Sunday is proof of this. Thomas did not just see Jesus; he saw Jesus as divine. This is a seeing that is tied in with experience and with the heart. In our encounters with people, we often experience goodness, gentleness, kindness, love and many other virtues. The sight given us by the Spirit helps us see, in all these experiences, the presence of God who is their source.

The new life of Spring this year seems more colourful and more vibrant than ever before because the lockdown has given our environment purer air to breath with much, much less pollution. This is God's way of showing us how our good works, our support and the help we give to those in need is reshaping and enriching our society into becoming more loving, more caring, and with a greater concern for the common good - just like that first Christian community.

Pope Francis: To be part of a Christian community is to belong to a group of believers who shun selfishness and give witness to God's love by loving and caring for one another. . . . True Christians ban individualism in order to encourage sharing and solidarity. There is no place for selfishness in the soul of a Christian. . . . The first Christian community was comprised of people who "felt their hearts pierced by the joyful announcement" of Christ's salvation for all. Acts provides a glimpse of that "communion of love" that existed and was fortified by listening to the apostolic teaching, sharing their goods with one another and taking part in the Eucharist and in prayer. Signs of a good Christian are found in the grace that comes from baptism which makes rivalries between young and old, men and women, rich and poor disappear. Baptismal grace also reveals the intimate bond between brothers and sisters in Christ who are called to share, to identify with others and to give according to each one's needs. This is a way of listening to the cry of the poor — which is very pleasing to God — and of giving back what belongs to God.

END NOTE: Two little boys were known troublemakers, stealing everything they could get their hands on, even from the church. One day a priest stopped one of the boys and asked, "Where is God?" The boy shrugged and the priest repeated, "Where is God?" The boy ran out of the

cathedral crying and went to his home where he hid in a closet. Eventually his brother found him and asked, "What's wrong?" The crying boy replied, "We're in trouble now! God is missing and they think we took him!"