Full Conviction

I have full conviction I'm a great driver. Someone left a note on my car. It said, "Parking Fine!"

Billy Graham was one of the greatest Christian evangelists of the twentieth century. He preached to millions across more than 185 countries, helping countless people encounter Jesus. But although he grew up in a Christian family, attending church didn't mean he was fully convicted of God's love. At a series of revival meetings, he encountered God's love in a profound way, recognising both his own unworthiness and God's grace. That encounter changed his life. His conviction would go on to change countless other lives.

We need full conviction.

You and I can be utterly convinced about things that are uncertain, like other people's intentions.

You and I can lack conviction about what matters most: our worth, our abilities, or whether things can get better.

Locally, we need conviction that there is hope amid mental illness, physical suffering, financial difficulties, family breakdown, loveless relationships and loneliness.

Globally, we need conviction that peace, reconciliation and justice are possible amid war, trafficking, discrimination and poverty.

You and I are made to live with full conviction about God, ourselves and our neighbours.

However, sin makes you and me doubt God, self, and neighbour.

Isaiah says: "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way." (Isaiah 53:5)

All experience doubts because of sin.

Jesus alone lived with full conviction.

Jesus alone lived without sin.

Jesus was fully convicted of his identity as God's Son, and God's love for you, and every human being.

Jesus was so fully convicted he gave his life for you and me and all on the cross.

Isaiah went on to say, "the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

In today's first reading, St Paul writes:

"For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with **full conviction**."

Full conviction about God's love.

As a disciple of Jesus, you and I don't have to be weighed down by uncertainty about everything.

There is one thing you and I can know with full conviction: **You are loved. You are chosen.**

These are not just words. This is the Gospel, the Good News. This Good News can transform you and me, the church, and society.

Our dual duty: Church and society.

In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." We belong to heaven, but we also have responsibilities here on earth.

Our heavenly duty is to revitalise the Church:

Evangelisation: think of the stories of changed lives from people's experience of alpha especially.

Servant leadership: see and play a part in the many service groups on our noticeboard. Every one of us has a part to play.

The power of the Holy Spirit: I'd love for people to share their experience of God's love coming into their heart in prayer ministry.

Our earthly duty is to help transform society: paying taxes, obeying just laws, challenging unjust ones lawfully, working honestly, paying fair wages,

studying diligently, honouring parents, nurturing children, being faithful in marriage, non-married couples consider marriage.

Friends, people around us are longing for hope.

Our colleagues, relatives, friends and neighbours may be struggling more than we realise.

Your gentle conviction of God's love might be exactly what someone needs this week.

Who might God be asking you to remind of his love?

How might you help revitalise our Church?

How might you help transform society?

Receive Jesus into your heart and in the Eucharist. Ask the Holy Spirit to deepen your conviction that you are loved and chosen, and to give you courage to share that Good News.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that, through you, I can be fully convicted of the Father's love for me. Come into my heart. Where I doubt, strengthen my conviction. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, that I may help revitalise your Church and transform society. In Jesus' name! Amen.