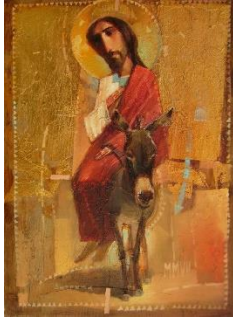


Notes for Brian's Sermon at Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Sun, Apr 5, 2020 – Palm Sunday



Facing the Infected City with Faith

(Ps 118:19-24 & 29 and Luke 19:28-40)

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

(Luke 19:39-40)

How does this fit into the story of God's forgiving and reconciling love

As we grow into our trust in the Creator's blessings, we become more and more aligned with our Creator's intent – that is the privilege and joy of awakening to the way things really are – in times of crisis, such as these, when the way things have been are so deeply disrupted and fears are so overwhelming, we find it difficult to focus on “blessings,” and “privilege,” and “joy”

Yet that is what faith is all about – it is about facing the infections of our times with a loyal devotion to our Creator's intent – it is about taking up the permissions our Creator has offered to be co-workers with our family of origin, the Holy Trinity, for the well-being of our common home – it's not prescribed, it's not imposed – it's invited, it's permitted, it's encouraged, it's enabled – the privilege to be blessings with joy

That's what flourishing in the faith is about – that's what we endeavour to nourish in these times together so you can be church in and for God's world with God throughout the week, wherever the Spirit guides your inspiration and influence

The story tells of Jesus facing the infections of his time, in the city from which many of those infections were spread among his kinfolk and their communities – there were infections of racism, of political oppression, of economic disparity, of social exclusion, of religious exploitation – the belonging God intended was diseased – people were distorting, or ignoring, or rejecting God's invitations to be blessings to all the nations and their habitats – So God, in the flesh of Jesus of Nazareth, entered the city to confront it's reality with God's intent

That intent, as we remind ourselves every week now when we sing the pray song we are calling 'The 9 Teachings of the Apostles' is that we compose our life together from the gifts God has given us so we can be blessings – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, and gentleness, all composed into a with-ness and witness to God's forgiving and reconciling love

Provocations to ponder

I was moved to tears this week listening to health care workers from around the world – everyone from national and provincial health care coordinators to cleaners and food service workers – talking about the stress and the exhaustion this onslaught of infection was causing, on top of all the others we have mentioned – and it's important to remember those other infections as we rebuild our life together after the pandemic has passed – but all of them kept going back to face their infected communities

I would say, with considered humility, that they went back with faith – trust in and loyalty to some primal energy in this world that drew them to care for the diseased, at great risk to themselves and their kin – none of them talked about that primal energy in Christian formulations – none of them even talked about God in the bits of the interviews that were shown – but they were, and are as we meet, and will be for some time to come co-working with God to bless this world – they are drawing heavily on all of those gifts we remember as the 9 Teachings of the Apostles to compose a community of interdependent well-being – and we are grateful

Possibilities for our missioning at Brentwood

I thought especially of Vanessa Boadu (Janet and Emmanuel's daughter) and Emily Harrison (Conrad Good's wife and Desmond's mom) this week – they work at St Paul's and UBC respectively and face infection every day – then there are those in our circles of inspiration and influence who lost jobs, are separated from families, are caring for aging, perhaps demented, relatives, are having their incomes reduced, are facing other diseases and ailments – it is a good thing, a crucial thing, when we hold those people up in prayer – then embody those prayers with calls, or emails, or texts to assure them that they do not face this infected city alone

My Notes



My Prayers

The image of Jesus entering Jerusalem was painted by Alexander Sorsher. You can more of his wonderful work at www.sorsherart.com.