

St Peter's, Ealing

Sunday 21st May 2017

Easter 6 – Christian Aid Sunday and Commissioning of the new PCC

We are the body of Christ

'We are the body of Christ', a phrase we hear most Sundays. Aptly, as we complete the acclamation we turn to our neighbours and shake hands. A sign that we are indeed in this together, we are not islands in the sea of faith but united. We are united in the common meal we share as part of our worship, the broken bread and out poured wine of Jesus' memorial supper, sharers in his body and blood; joint receivers of the grace of God through the sacrament of the church.

The temptation is to see this as just another thing we do on church. It may make us feel a little uncomfortable but it must be done. What it should be is an indication of the true nature of the church. Real people coming together as a living breathing community draw not by any other commonality than the love of God and the power of the Holy Spirit showing us God's love through the gift of Jesus.

This thing called church then is a living, breathing entity. Paul chose his analogy for the church used in his epistles with care. He speaks of the church being the body of Christ, one in which each part of that body relies on the other; the eye needs the ear who needs the foot who in turn needs the hand and so on. One part cannot exist without the other.

As we share the peace, as we acknowledge each other, this reality should become more true. Look around, see who you are sharing with in church today. Would you in all honesty have naturally met or shared with those you share with in church if it was not for the shared faith we have? I seriously doubt it. Yet here we are and we need each other.

To continue this image there must be an acceptance that if this body is to exist it must have life. It must be dynamic and living, engaging, sharing and growing. Otherwise, like any body, it will wither and die.

Today we celebrate and commission those who have been elected to the role of PCC member. A role that should be taken on with joy and a sense of honour in serving the community of God in this place, in this way. To serve each other is an important part of the Christian mission. Jesus called his disciples to service as he himself served them. We then are called to serve each other and take a dynamic part in the life and ministry of the church, the body of Christ.

Today's gospel speaks of love. How we show our love for Jesus in keeping his commands and the command he has given us is to love. This love comes not out of griping or grumbling but out of generosity and joy. The generosity of God was to give us his son that we might know God's love for us. How great is that, that God gives us his only son and all he wants from us is to love in return. And that love is not just to direct our love to God or to Jesus but to love one another as God has loved us; with generosity, with joy.

One of the saddest things I find in ministry is when we get into a rut of grumbling and lack of charity. We all do it some time, especially when we take our eye off God.

As we commission this new PCC for the coming year lets pray that we can nurture a spirit of generosity and love, that we can keep our focus on God and seek whatever way we can to serve him in each other. Let us all be prepared when ever possible to say 'yes' to God; say yes to living in his light and truth; say yes to living in and sharing his love. As we commission our PCC let us pray for them that they may find joy in serving God through his church and people so we can all truly say together 'we are the body of Christ'.