

Faith Sharing 2 – Advent 2019



Listen and Ask!

The Heartbeat of God

Prompts in the Gospel according to John

Pray and Say: “A pure heart create for me, O God. Put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit.”

Introduction: The above prayer is from Psalm 51. For us it shows a vision of a new life in the spirit, a firm desire that this new life should be embraced as an undeserved but welcome gift.

As part of our Advent preparation it seems useful to withdraw ourselves if able to, however briefly, from the usual materialistic concerns of Christmas pressure. Instead, we should try to feed our minds and nourish our hearts, on the greatest gift of all: the Holy Spirit. Or we could ask, “Where is God in our lives?”

The Gospel according to John



John, of all the New Testament writers, has the most penetrating gaze into the heart and mind of God. His emblem is that of an eagle. Very significantly, in the three synoptic Gospels, “Jesus is bent on establishing the...Kingdom of God...while in John...Jesus principally reveals himself and his relationship to the Father” (Wansbrough). Thus, in John, miracles and events are not so much deeds of compassion as deeds of Christ’s glory. For John, the lesson of these were signs of the reality of God bursting into human life. In this way at a human level we are able to personally

Identify more readily in spirit with Jesus’ miracles and events.

The Key



From the Human to the Divine

Ponder, if you can, looking at the above image:

- Is it irrelevant, irreverent, strange, serious, humorous, trite?
- What could the key and abyss represent?
- Do we all face an abyss in our lives?
- Would each person's abyss be of the same depth?
- Are the figures having a race? A competition?
- Why is nobody running in the opposite direction?

Where is God in all this? We can know, by reason, that God exists, but not what God is really like. But God has revealed himself in many ways to us – out of love – although sometimes we may, in our humanity, choose to ignore him. Thus, God, being the author of Sacred Scripture, inspired the human authors of the sacred books. These books teach the truth.

Specifically, let us now try to move **personally** and more **closely** from our own **humanity** towards our own **divinity** as journeyed in John's Gospel.

Ponder more keys: The Keys of the Kingdom may have been given to Peter, but the Keys of the Holy Spirit would have been given to John. The “real” journey in John is the journey inward, to the heart, where life in abundance can be experienced. It is a journey of choices and direction: to live in the light or to live in darkness, to take the path of salvation or the path of unbelief, to live in this world or to pass over into another world which is eternal.

John’s Gospel alone tells us about...

- The feast at Cana(2:1-11), the visit of Nicodemus(3:1-15), the woman at the well(4), raising of Lazarus(11), washing of the feet(13:1-17), the Holy Spirit(Chaps14-17), etc.

If time, choose to reflect on one or some of these events: e.g.

Cana:

“The wine dries up”(Jn 2 + Isaiah 24). It would have been the bridegroom’s duty to arrange the wine to avoid this potential humiliation. Mary, now at the start of Jesus’ ministry, shows trust and faith, by asking him, as a favour, to perform this function. He responds to this task as bridegroom, sparing the family’s blushes and the disciples see glory. Mary, at the Cross, is also at the end of his ministry, when she is entrusted to the care of the disciple who rested on the breast of Jesus, **listening to the heartbeat of God**, traditionally known to be John, the author of the Gospel.

Your Holy Spirit Prompt: Your own questions! e.g. what has Isaiah to do with Cana? How has John to care for Mary? etc..

Concluding Prayer: In the light of the Holy Spirit, never changing but always new, let us never model ourselves on the behaviour of the world around us, but let our behaviour change, modelled on the new mind of the Holy Spirit.