

A year ago, on this same Pentecost Sunday – we committed as a parish to be Ambassadors for Christ as part of the Diocese of London 2020 Mission Commitment. Every year on Pentecost Sunday every congregation is invited to reaffirm their commitment to living in the light of the spirit of Christ. One of the things we did as a parish as part of this commitment last year was to begin sharing in the 2 minute slot each Sunday, something of our lives of faith. So often we talk about our life of faith as if it is somehow separate from us – some other part of our complex life – but actually faith life – is life. Our faith is an integral part of who we are, it is just for many of us sometimes it is hard to talk about the God part of us.

The 2 minutes slot is an attempt for us to make space of us to share our God part with each other. It may not be in church but maybe it inspires us a little to talk about how God is part of the lives that we live – because God is.

On Thursday, Fr Laurence and I had the great privilege to go to a study morning which was on the theme of vocation. Pentecost is often a time when we consider vocation because it is about what the spirit of God is doing in our lives, and what we believe we are being called too.

We are all called by God, to very many different tasks and with very many different skills and abilities. On Thursday our session started with a really interesting lecture given by Jane Williams on the topic of ‘The God who calls’. She asked us to consider call not through the story of the Gospel but through the eyes of Genesis. She suggested that if we want to understand call we need to *go back to the beginning and remember why we are called!*

She reminded us that as people, made in the image of God, who are descendants of heaven and of earth, we are all called to a task, on behalf of God. In a sense we have an interdependence in God. Our faith unites us in a set of relationships which calls us to behave and live in a particular way – and at the heart of this way is our interrelationship with God, creation and one another.

I found this a very helpful image because so often the image of call is that of the story of Samuel, when a single person hears the voice of God and calls them to be a great leader. And for some, this is true. But for most of us, the call of God is about this relationship of faith with God, and living that out each day and moment.

It is not easy, it is not hard, it doesn’t mean there are no challenges or questions, but equally it doesn’t mean that life is full of questions and challenges. Most of life, most of faith is about being – quite often one of the hardest things to do!

Jane Williams referred to this being as the ‘New humanity’ that is the art of being human is about being in relationship with God – and through this we know that we are blest and we seek to be a blessing to others. She made the comment that the church in some ways is the school of this new humanity, where we are learning how

to be human in God, which is probably why we can annoy each other at times, as we learn to be ourselves in God.

The notion of vocation then is not about being called to be a Priest or a Deacon, though it could be, but rather that we are each called to be human in God. Finding the God shaped part of us and making the most of it.

We are each called to find what it is that God seeks of us. For some of us, this will be in the process of being fulfilled; for others of us, we may have fulfilled part of our call, but have a new calling now to answer. The call of God is not a one off thing, it is a life's work, and as such at different times in our life we will be called to new and different expressions of our humanity in God.

Pentecost reminds us that the spirit of God, the expression of God in our humanity is always at work in our midst, inspiring us in new and refreshing ways. It is not something we often talk about easily.

This is the central importance of Pentecost story as we heard recorded in Acts: the Spirit's transformation of the church into a community of prophets. The community that had gathered in Jesus' name is now made something that they were not before: prophets of God's word, the good news of Jesus. That transforming Spirit is given to all of them, apparently not just the disciples, but the larger community.¹ Luke's account of the coming of the spirit is that it is life giving, it is poured out on everyone, so that everyone might know God, so that everyone might know themselves in God.

The call of God, the vocation of all humanity, is to share God's spirit and to share this knowledge. At the end of today's service we will promise to be part of this sharing of the spirit, and we will take a light from the Easter candle, and take it with us wherever we go. This symbolism tries to help us embody this message from Acts, but also from our tradition of faith – that each one of us is called to share the good news of Christ – we are each called to share the story of our faith and called to be human in God – finding and sharing the God shaped part of us.

And how do we do this? Well we live. Because when we live in relationship with God this shines out, and others will ask us questions about the way that we live.

On Friday night at the Brent Pentecost Celebration in Wembley, Bishop Pete made this point; being prophets' doesn't mean we each stand on a street corner, or that we all are called to be priests (though some of us will be called to be priests and evangelists) being prophets means we pray actively for others to know God, but most importantly being prophets means we live as God calls us to live in relationship with God. We encounter God when we are open to it, and ready to listen.

¹ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1630

He then told a story of an atheist who was fishing alone on Loch Ness in Scotland when suddenly his boat was tossed into the air by a giant beast; he was struck by the tail of the Loch Ness Monster into the air; as he sailed through the air heading for the mouth of the monster he called out 'God, please help me'. Suddenly the scene froze and God appeared in the sky and spoke to the man - 'I thought you didn't believe in me and now you are asking for my help' - the man replied ' Well I didn't believe in the Loch Ness monster till 2 minutes ago either, but life changes!'

We never know where life leads us, or when we might call out to God. At Pentecost we are reminded of the importance of living in the spirit of God and responding to God's call on our lives. Today we will re-affirm our commitment to being Ambassadors, re-affirm our commitment to praying for others to also come to know God. We also need to be open to listening to what it is that God is calling each of us to. How is God calling to you at this moment? Is there a step you need to take; a question you need to ask; a choice you need to make? Is God calling you to a specific task or way of living?

Pentecost reminds us to make time to listen to our connectedness to God and see where that might be taking us. And if this unsettles us a little then we can take comfort in the words which Jesus offers the disciples in the Gospel reading we heard this morning. Jesus reassures them that they are able to love and keep the commandments because of the Spirit, which would be with them forever. We should never forget this promise!

This Pentecost, let us be open to God's call in each of us - Finding the God shaped part of us and making the most of it, , and knowing we do not need to fear because in the spirit we are never left alone, and we will always be connected to something more. Amen.