

Sunday 19th June 2022
Mass of the Holy Spirit
(First Eucharist for the Revd Jenny Brady)

Liverpool Parish Church

OT: Wisdom 9, 13-17
NT: Romans 8, 22-27
G: John 14 23-26

Good morning everyone, its lovely to be with you today, some of you I have met before of course at the QD. Thank you so much to Jenny and Fr Crispin for inviting me to preach at such a special service. It's a privilege to do so.

Let us pray...Creative God may the words you have given be remembered and those you have not given be forgotten, Amen

I've known Jenn y for 6 years and have accompanied her on her walk from tentatively thinking God might be calling her to ordination, through the selection process and then through her training and onto her curacy here with you.

I've accompanied several others over the years, most in F/T employment as they trained, just like Jenny. All have found it extremely stressful, some complaining too much is expected, but Jenny has never complained, I don't mean she has found it easy, especially whist holding down a social workers post, but she has soaked it all up and been thrilled with the chance to learn and to deepen her faith and her excitement and joy has been infectious, so its been a real pleasure to be with her – something I'm sure you have begun to experience for yourselves. Jenny's lived experience is that she can trust the Lord for herself, for Lily and Kev, so she is able to say with the psalmist 'To you, O Lord I lift up my soul, in you I trust O my God.'

But, Sometimes, as we look around the world, the church our country its hard to say that isn't it? There seems chaos and trouble everywhere. We want to shout 'How long Lord, how long? And to ask 'Why Lord, why?' In our reading from Wisdom the question is asked, who can know the ways of God, we find it hard enough to understand what's going on in our own sphere and then we hear we can only begin to understand if we are granted Wisdom and sent the HS, for Wisdom teaches us what pleases God.

So, Wisdom is essential for us if we want to deepen our faith in and understanding of God. In Ecclesiasticus 1v9 we read about Wisdom that, The Lord himself has created her, looked on her

and assessed her, and poured her out on all his works to be with humanity as his gift and conveyed her to those who love him. Wow! What a gift! And not just for some but for all.

What makes this especially exciting and encouraging for me is that Wisdom is always referred to in the feminine, her, she, quite unique in Biblical times in such a male dominated society and even today some would say! and so Wisdom is often said to be the feminine face of God.

In Wisdom ch 7 she is described as holy...a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty...she is a reflection of the eternal light, untarnished mirror of God's active power, image of his goodness. So, no doubting her authenticity, integrity or importance.

In Proverbs 8 she speaks and tells us that 'The Lord created me at the beginning of his work. The first of his acts of long ago, so she has seen it all, nothing can shock her and later that she says that she delights in the human race' How special, the idea that she, Wisdom delights in us. Reminds me of the passage from Isaiah 43 where God promises to be with us because we are precious, honoured and loved. I'm sure that's the reason Jesus promises that he and the Father will come and make their home in us, why, simply because they want to be with us, they love us.

In Ecclesiasticus 15 she says that she will come to us as a mother and give us the bread of understanding.

And in Wisdom 8 that she will be a guide.

I think you will be beginning to make the connection with the HS promised in John 14; the Advocate the one who will teach us everything and remind us of all Jesus said. Some would say they are one and the same person of the Trinity, I'll leave you to decide what you think.

Solomon in his book turns to prayer (Ch8) 'knowing, as he writes she (Wisdom) would be my counsellor in prosperity, my comfort in cares and sorrows but also that he could not master Wisdom except by the gift of God he entreats God to give him Wisdom.'

A great prayer for us also, to pray for the world, for our country, for our church, for ourselves to help us in our groaning as mentioned in our passage from Romans, our groaning as we ask when and why. And we don't have to worry too much about the words of our prayer, what is important

is our desire for things to change for healing to come, for the chaos to end, the spirit will understand our groans, our desire and intercede for us, that takes the pressure off doesn't it?

In Ecclesiasticus we are told (6) 'Go after Wisdom and seek her: she will reveal herself to you (again it's our desire that is key): once you hold her, do not let her go. For in the end you will find rest in her and she will take the form of joy in you'. Joy that special deep emotion only God can give, but it does say in the end you will find rest and joy, so it's a process.

How do we engage in that process, well at the beginning I said Jenny had learnt to trust God because that was her lived experience. What is our lived experience, are we able to say how God has worked in our lives? Perhaps have a think about that, look back over your journey and see how God has worked. Its good to stop at the end of the day and ask God to show us where, when, and how he has been with us today then listen and talk to him about what comes up, it builds up our trust, our awareness

And its good to take time to be quiet, to listen to the inner voice of the Spirit, of Wisdom, the voice that guides us in the way of life, of hope, of love, those things that give us courage to trust even when we don't understand, to have peace and patience as we wait. Solomon entreats God for the gift of Wisdom, entreats that's a strong word isn't it? We need to do the same if we are serious in our desire but actually I think we all already have Wisdom what we need to entreat God for is for help to get in touch with what's inside and to allow that wisdom to grow in us. For us to accept and open the gift we have been given.

Joyce Rupp has written a super little book about Wisdom and called it the Star in my Heart, reminding us that we all have that promise of the gift of Wisdom. Remember that verse telling us that God poured her out on all his works. I'm going to close with a prayer from her book

There's a star inside of me;
She shines there in my heart
And waits to be recognised.

Darkness tries to scare her off,
Ego attempts to ignore her,
Busyness pushes her around.
But this wonderful shining star

Keeps twinkling, all aglow.

She waits to lead me
To an unknown meadow
Where the truth of who I am
Will be revealed to me.

Shining star, faithful star,
When will I follow you?
When will I come to the meadow,
where truth will set me free?
How do you respond, what is your desire?

Revd Sue Calvely