



St Marylebone  
Parish Church

## 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 2021, 8.30am BCP Holy Communion

He's on a roll today... the conclusion of St Paul's Epistle to the Galatians is the Epistle (from the back of the New Testament) set for this Sunday of the year. Earlier in this Epistle St Paul has scrawled 'you foolish Galatians!'. Love it. Such passion and fire as they work out what it means to live in the light of Christ's Resurrection. Today's final words of the letter begin with St Paul saying, see what massive writing I am using in my own hand to lay this down for you. It's the equivalent perhaps of Basil Faulty's - 'let me spell this out for you in words of one syllable'. And what is he so eager, see desperate to have them understand? That it is no longer by circumcision that they are put right with God. No longer by circumcision that they know God loves them and is leading them home to the Promised Land. No. A 'new creature', we hear today, a new creation has begun in Jesus. By the death and Resurrection of Jesus the matter of the universe has been changed - now, it is not a matter of foreskins and laws - now God has shown His hand: every corner of the cosmos is destined for a glorious and heavenly new and eternal homeland. Everything less than that has been crucified with Jesus, now the door stands open.

This vision of glory has, like wildfire, cascaded through the centuries from the early Church trying to work out what it all means, through the saints and sinners of our Christian family tree to us today. This hope-ful vision of glory has inspired countless millions in prayer, love, service and self-sacrifice. Our confidence is in the destiny God in Christ has opened to us now, not in circumcisions, or rules and Brownie Points.

Sometimes, sometimes, as we drag ourselves and our children out of bed on a Sunday morning and slope here through quiet streets, on scooters and sleepy tube trains; or for that matter as we rush out the door midweek to work and school, or potter round a quiet house in the middle of the day, or whatever life looks like for each of us, sometimes

this vision of glory can seem rather a long way away. Sometimes, as we come forward to receive the seal of this promise of glory in the Eucharistic banquet, a hurried chew on a stiff biscuity wafer can seem a pretty long way from cosmic re-creation and the heavenly metropolis. But they're not, truly they're not. It is in the mundane and the secular and the ordinary stuff of life that Christians have always found God at work. In family life, in the different phases of life, in relationships and communities, in Word and Sacrament: these are and *always* are places of divine encounter. If only we would realise it.

This same theme, but from a different angle, forms the basis of Jesus' teaching in today's Gospel. Serve mammon, chase mammon, put your trusts and hopes in mammon, and you will have only that. Well done, perhaps it will be nice, perhaps it won't.

But in the lilies and the birds of the air, we find creatures being exactly what they were created to be. Even now, on *this* side of the new creation, by embracing its reality, mundanity (?), not trying to be anything other than it is, we find creation reflecting the *glory* of life and being beautiful: glorious precisely because it is simply being what it was made for.

Let us do the same. We're not in heaven yet. Christ is yet to come again. *But*, if we 'seek first the Kingdom of God', if we embrace the you and me that God made you and me to be, then we will already be conduits of glory, people living on the edge of glory - not the glory of the world, not the glory of fakery, or ambition, nostalgia or malaise - but the real thing of real life, the life in which God has actually put you; which is the path to glory, because all real life is. And the Christian faith is all about living real life.

No wonder St Paul wrote in such big letters, because that is a vision - both completely practical, real and everyday, and also fizzing with gloriously divine hope and joy - that its worth getting excited about...