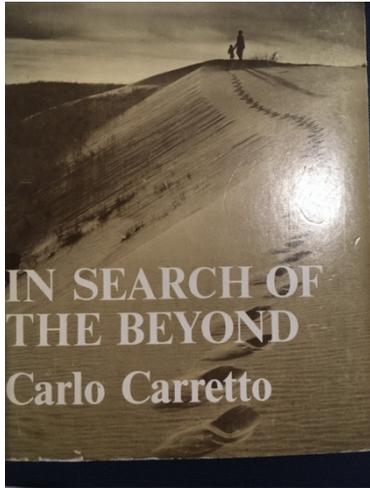


Pentecost 3, 2nd Sunday after Trinity

Jeremiah 20: 7-13 & Matthew 10: 24-39

“A member of the older generation, wedded to the established order and to principles of economy, maybe anxious lest window-panes and furniture should begin to fly back and forth... life has taught me one thing: that he who protests loves, and he who protests much loves much.”¹



So began a much loved book, to which I returned after a period of 25 years. The Prologue could have been written yesterday, it was so appropriate! Carlo Carretto continues to say that he never understands why those who are challenged never come out into the open and say “You are right, brothers, things are going badly, and it is our fault. You are right to rebuke us. We have made bad use of our power, we have abused your trust. Forgive us and help us to change.”² Perhaps we need to ask ourselves the question: What is the underlying reason for these people, this generation, to set out so energetically

and persistently, to emphasise that things are going so badly? We need to listen and then to act! Some of the problems in our society have been evident for some time, whilst others are only just emerging. It is sad when we only get action after extreme events have taken place. Even then, it has been known for issues to be side-stepped in the hope that they will go away (which, of course, they do not)!

Life can be difficult, and for some impossible. Yet, in ‘finding our lives we lose them’³, usually involves ‘taking up your cross’⁴ as God continues to direct us in the Way we should walk! Our world and society are full of injustice, social division, and fear. To walk with Jesus is to put aside our fear as we learn to walk with Love for others and in mutual Compassion. It has often been said that you do not know how someone feels until you have stood in their shoes. This is what is happening now. We see and hear in the media about people’s concerns and support for others. There have been some truly dreadful stories George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks & Neomi Bennett⁵ to name but a few. Hearing is not enough. There must also be action!

¹ In Search of the Beyond: Carlo Carretto p.7 DLT

² ibid

³ Matt 10: 39

⁴ Matt 10: 38

⁵ Guardian p.17, 18th June

Pentecost 3, Trinity 2

Simon Western, a Quaker wrote:

*Forget the contemporary, desperate search for happiness, forget consumerism and looking younger, forget fundamentalism and certainty, they all offer answers but to the wrong question. Sadness is not to be overcome, but to be embraced. My experience is that I have to live in the gap between despair and hope; the space that exists between the desperate cry of Jesus on the cross 'My God, My God why has thou forsaken me' and his letting go 'Father, into your hands I give my spirit'. If we can live fully in the redemptive space between the crucifixion and the resurrection, there we will find God; there we will find the truth, there we plant the seeds of the resurrection within.*⁶

This is the realm in to which our society and the Church are entering. For too long we have wanted certainty, hence all the protective legislation that has been issued. There is a real desire for change and to live in a different fairer world. Letting go of certainty is not easy. It reminds me of the swimming lesson when I had to push out from the safety of the pool side and swim without any buoyancy aid. (You will perhaps have had a similar experience too) It takes courage, but venturing out into the unfamiliar can save your life! Indeed it can turn into a new home! Perhaps this is what Jeremiah was referring to when he wrote: *O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed.*⁷ Living Jesus' Way is truly life transforming. It puts us at our ease and we can be content in life's adventure, however difficult the road ahead may seem. Our journey begins where we are now. What could be easier! We need to remember that God is never better revealed than when we are in the abyss of human wretchedness. Wasn't it in Babylon that Israel rediscovered God, and in that fearful loneliness and gloom that true Hope was born? The Hope that was to sustain the little 'remnant' and prepare it to welcome the messianic age.

As our walk into the future continues and 'lockdown' begins to ease from the 29th June you may like to consider this:

Begin where you are. Love what is around you. Attend to every moment. Spiritual practice commences, not in the heights of mastery, not in a profusion of book wisdom, or any qualification busy human beings could dream up. It arises when we grasp hold of ordinary things with a thirst to find the Eternal. When we seek to find the bottomless meaning in every moment: in a spider's web caught by the sun, in the face of another, the deep grey of the sky; there is the Kingdom. We need not leave home to be spiritually at home. We need not go far to be in the arms of love.

⁶ <https://transitionquaker.blogspot.com/2013/02/love-and-affliction.html>

⁷ Jeremiah 20: 7

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As Teresa of Avila wrote: "God walks amongst the pots and pans."⁸ In doing the ordinary, extraordinary things will happen. Love will come to the fore and lives will be transformed. Prepare yourself for the next stage of the journey: What will YOU need so that you can be there for those in greatest need? As we work to build a new fairer and just future.

⁸ Book of Foundations Teresa of Avila 1610