

Proper 2, 2 before Lent

Genesis 2:4b-9,15-25. second creation, woman, approval of family man leaving parents etc. Man and woman become one flesh.

Revelation 4. worship. Awe. Fantastic

Luke 8:22-25. Calming storm. Where is your faith.

After all the excitement of Christmas we're now in what is ordinary time.
I like ordinary time. Reflection, catching up, growth.

So what can I reflect from these lessons. There is so much that I could preach on today.

- The two creation stories, how they differ, and what this tells us about our attitudes to scripture.
- I could preach about how man came first and woman is merely the extra. Or perhaps, biologically, that it is the other way round – that scripture has it wrong – woman is the basic form and man the refinement.
- And I could preach about how we are formed from the earth (Adam) and to the earth we shall return. Scientifically, of course, this is absolutely true. We are formed from the material of the earth, of the universe, the chemicals, the molecules, the atoms, the subatomic particles of which the universe is made – the stardust if you like that resulted from the big bang. And when we die, When the worms come and eat us up, these same subatomic particles that have been you and me will once more go back to the general melee in the universe, and be made into something else. If we call God the sum total of everything in the universe, then we certainly return to God.

What is explicit in all this is change and growth.

Journeys.

And the expulsion from Eden is, if you like, a saga of the journey of life – we left the Garden of Eden – that is existence in God, and we then go on life's journey until finally we return to him. We seek to rise. And in so doing we leave our parents and form new relationships.

This formation of new relationships is an expression in love.
God is love, so it is done in God.

No clinging. You'll remember that Jesus advised us to shed the family – for new relationships.
We must leave our parents, but never forget from where we come.

In all our relationships we should remember that we are made in God's image.
We are all children of God.
Gays. If you draw a line, J is on other side of it.

Jesus is the perfect reflection of God – wisdom terminology. We have Christ within, as Paul and the church fathers tell us. And all of us will see the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, and approach that image as Wesley says: finish then thy new creation.

Gospel

In times of difficulty, trust in God.
Throughout our journey
Calming storm then
Calming storm now

Both

We come from God, we depend on God
So we can rely on God

And is not this what the Gospel tells us.
Think about that story
Fishing, storm, call on Jesus and bob's your uncle.
How do we call on Jesus

We listen to what he says, we interpret it in the light of our experience and situation, and we try our best, doing nothing that we don't want others to do to us.

In other words, we love our neighbours as ourselves.
And in so doing, we love God with all our heart, with all our souls, with all our mind and with all our strength.

The reading tells us we can be courageous . Call on Jesus and be bold.

No more hiding our light under a bushel – it is not ours to hide.

And let me have no false modesty about this. I help nobody by hiding my light in case it embarrasses others, and I certainly do not help myself. It is, in any case, not my light to hide.

'There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.' *Marianne Williamson Return to Love*, p 165

'The incarnation', means that we are most holy when we are most fully human. Be BOLD.

I saw a good programme. Muslims, alcohol
Why do we criticise Muslims for opposing vice?
We should be doing it too.
We need courage.

It's through dealing with difficult experiences that we grow – tested in the refiner's fire. When we enfold our past, when we absorb and learn from our experiences, we can allow them to help us to help others: our pain and joy can help create a source of healing for others.

As Pope Benedict XVI says, we lose nothing by letting Christ into our lives
Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything. When we give ourselves to him, we receive a hundredfold in return.

Fling wide the gates. Sunday, 24 April 2005.