

Community

St. Patrick's Day was coming up. I had been asked for some information. He used the lovely shamrock leaf as a teaching aid. This trefoil illustrated the community of God. The Trinity.

We are His creation; 'Princes and rulers, old men and children, young men and maidens'

God led his people, through Moses, out into the desert, and gave the law. He gave word to the prophets, sending them out into the world.

God's great gift of His son, Jesus, our Saviour; grace and truth came through Him.

God's Holy Spirit comes to us as we gather; "For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them."

God didn't intend for us to live in isolation. He wants us as His flock "

Like the sheep in the field

"In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost". (Matt. 18:14)

This beautiful and living community invites believers to share in it. To inhabit and grow as a community of God, we are created to desire this belonging.

'As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.'

(Psalm 42.)

The anchoress, Julian of Norwich in her writings speaks of her experience of God and His unity with us; 'touching us, cheering us, sharing understanding, joy and sorrow, securely protected by love.'

God cannot be angry with us. He loves and forgives. He longs to comfort us with His words. This is Julian's knowledge learned through suffering. This knowledge is intended to be shared.

Truth and grace through Jesus, His son, teaches and demonstrates through His words and His life, how we should live, as He lived.

In a community of men and women, He encouraged and demonstrated, a life-giving way of loving, sharing and being.

'Carry each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2.)

As He and His disciples encountered those suffering, Jesus met those in sickness, frailty, grief, brokenness and sin. In his humility, as the son of God,

He stopped, listened, loved and healed them. The disciples and followers came supporting, working alongside and learning.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ, we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all the others.” (Romans 12: 4-5.)

“How good it is when brothers live together in unity!
...For there the Lord bestows His blessing” (Psalm 133.)

As the early church met, ate and worshipped together. “the Lord added to their number daily those who were saved” (Acts 2. 46-47.)

It can be hard on some of us to commit to community especially if we are guarded or prefer solitude. But it is God’s desire. It is a sign of mature faith. When we grow in relationship to others, we grow in relationship to God. “And let us consider how we may spur one another on, towards love and good deeds. Let us not give up on meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as we see the day approaching.” (Hebrews 10, 24-25.)

Going to church is important, but to be a Christ follower, we must be one in the context of *all* our communities. Paul held love above all else. “Bear with each other and forgive one another, if any of you has a grievance against someone. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds men altogether in perfect unity” (Colossians 3. 13-14.)

Jesus warns the disciples “I am going to the One who sent me”, therefore, “Another counsellor, the Spirit of God, will be with you”. (John 14.16-17.)
“When the spirit of truth comes he will guide you” (John 16. 12-13)

In regard to embracing community, Jesus said and did many wise things. He said to Peter, “Take care of my sheep”
Jesus final words at His crucifixion were to the disciple whom he loved, concerning Mary, “Here is your mother” from that time on, this disciple took her into his home”. (John 19:27)

As Christians, I believe we are a community of living souls with those many believers who have gone before, united as we are, in God’s community of love.

We are bidden to be aware and to inhabit our communities. To stop, listen and love.

All is love and love is all. Thanks be to God. Amen.