

Vendée Sunday 6 November 2016 11.00 La Chapelle Palluau
HC All Saints Patronal Festival.

(Job 19 : 23 – 27a

Psalm 17 : 1 – 8 or 9.

2 Thessalonians 2 : 1 – 5 & 13 – 17.

Luke 20 : 27 – 38.)

I would like to thank God for all that the Chaplains have done for L’Eglise Anglais de la Vendée. Also thank you to Caroline, Bob and James for all work they did in the vicarage and all of you who have helped prepare it for our arrival. Thank you, too, for the welcoming Italian supper. You are all most generous and kind. Now we are called together to make sure things will continue under God. But always remember, ‘we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake’. (2 Corinthians 4 v 5)

I suppose you could say that a saint is someone who believes in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ which all the saints believe and proclaim?

God loves you. This is something we can say to anybody, even after having a still born child, even after being diagnosed with cancer, even after someone we love dearly has died. As St Paul reminds us, ‘not even death, nor anything else, can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord’. (Romans 8 vv 38 & 39)

All have sinned. I think the story of Adam and Eve is a representative story. We can’t just blame it all on two individuals, one male, one female, who lived a long time ago and far, far away. They represent **us: we** have sinned. Even King Solomon recognised this. In his great prayer at the dedication of the first temple in Jerusalem, he said, ‘If (your people) sin against you – for there is no one who does not sin’ - and ‘if they repent’, ‘then hear in heaven your dwelling-place their prayer and forgive’. (I Kings 8 v 46 // 2 Chronicles 6 v 36) Some 400 or 500 years later, right at the end of the Book of Job, he says, ‘I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes’. (Job 42 v 6) As St Paul says, ‘all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.’ (Romans 3 v 23 et al)

So we need to die to sin, rather like the alcoholic needs to say no to alcohol, the person who has gluten intolerance has to say no to

gluten, the paedophile must delete all offensive files. Repent and believe in the gospel.

Jesus Christ is the answer. We need help, forgiveness, salvation, and we Christians believe Jesus is the one to give it. In part I think this is how he gives himself, on the cross, his life so we can live, echoing the words of Isaiah, ‘by his bruises we are healed’, (Isaiah 53 v 5) echoes of the wonderful passage from the book of Job, ‘I know that my redeemer lives’, (Job 19 v 25) a bit like the way an organ donor gives an organ, including blood, so that someone else may live. Of course the Sadducees, as we read in the gospel, could not accept Jesus’ teaching because they had already decided that there is no resurrection. But that is not all. In the Gospels Jesus often admonishes people not to tell what he has done for them. After he is risen, this changes. Then he tells them to go and tell. Look at the end chapters of the Gospels and you will see. All the sermon notes in the Acts of the Apostles proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. This demonstrates his power, his lordship, over sin and death. He is Lord of all. He forgives.

Give your life to Him. Accept forgiveness. Receive him into our lives with his power to overcome all that is reprehensible, where we are too weak to do it by ourselves. Receive him in faith as we witness to each other in the words of the creed and in dedication to Him as we receive Holy Communion. Some may find the words of the Billy Graham Prayer the best way to do this, ‘Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe you died for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door of my heart and life. I receive you as my personal Lord and Saviour. Thank you for saving me.’

As Christians, we are not alone. God loves us. Jesus is with us. God the Holy Spirit lives in us. We saints travel with all the saints.

Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word. Amen.

