

## **Wednesday Holy Communion, 21 October 2020**

**Anne Kiggell**

***Ephesians 3<sup>1-12</sup>; Luke 12<sup>39-48</sup>***

### ***Always being ready for the Lord***

This stern warning always reminds me of Ronald Knox, when he was Catholic chaplain here at the university, so some of you may have heard it before. He wrote to a friend, saying that his Bishop had called on him unexpectedly, and found him at prayer in the chapel; *'What a coup!'* he said.

But which of us could claim to be in total readiness for the Lord's coming – especially at an 'unexpected hour'. Whatever Jesus may have meant in his own human mind at a time when he clearly expected something dramatic to happen in the near future, we must understand our own meeting with Jesus as being the moment of our death. And this is a moment we spend most of our life not thinking about, and we can become very good indeed at that – indeed it would be wrong to spend too much time in the world God has given us to live in, brooding about the distant future. It is rather different as one gets nearer to that moment, and fear of human loss, fear of the unknown – and perhaps fear of not being properly prepared – can become uncomfortable preoccupations.

Nobody, at whatever age, can live in a state of constant sanctity – from Peter and Paul onwards, Christians are all too conscious of our human failings. But rather than striving, often despairingly, for a super-spiritual life, we can keep faithfully doing what Therese of Lisieux called 'little things for God'. Small sacrifices in order to help others, whether they are sacrifices of money or time, or simply convenience, can be done in the conscious companionship of Jesus, and with his grace can become a second – and truer - nature. These actions are not merely enriching our own inner life, they are gently spreading the gospel. There are plenty of people who would never think of themselves as missionaries or evangelists, whose lessons are spread by simple loving-kindness.

In a time of worry and confusion and loneliness, it can sometimes be hard to feel, as well as to believe in theory, that a loving God is caring for us, but if we listen to what Paul wrote to the Ephesians, as he faced the daily prospect of death, we see that he

too lived through times of suffering, spiritual conflict, and disappointment at apparent failure. But he clung to his belief in *“the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God . . . the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord”*.

We know that Jesus brought us the message that God is love – a love beyond our understanding, in how it can and does encompass earthly suffering, but a love which we can trust with absolute certainty.

We know, because of this, that his purpose for each of us, and for his whole creation is that it shall be saved by his love – he came, as St Paul said, that *“all the world should be saved”* - and this saving love is one whose purposes we can share by our own actions. We know that throughout human history there have been dramatic events – climatic changes, natural disasters as the earth lives its own life, terrible diseases – each of which did seem to herald total destruction, but new life has dawned again and again, and God’s message of saving love has struggled through again, until his purposes of salvation were revealed to us in the life and the teaching, and above all the resurrection, of Jesus. So may it be with our own lives and with the life of our world today. Amen