

Reflection Sunday 14th March

John 3:14-21

¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

The John 3:16 verse is one of the most quoted verses by people in the church; if they know just 2 verses it is the beginning of Psalm 23 and this one. It is often seen displayed on banners at sporting events and other places. I am not sure how just having "John 3:16" displayed makes a difference to most viewers.

The truth within it is of great importance and the next verse is also of importance. Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to be a saviour. Jesus came that those who believe in him should have eternal life; eternal life is so often translated as beginning at death. That is not a full way of looking at it. Eternal life is not solely about eschatology it is about a quality of life that begins in the now and will overflow into the eternal future. A quality of life we are invited to offer to the communities around us.

The Church is called upon to be the Body of Christ, to reflect Christ to the world. So often though the church is seen as condemning the world and being critical of many things within it. Our calling is to be people of salvation, healing, freedom and so much more. Jesus was one who would be critical of inappropriate action, particularly by the religious, but he was not into condemnation. John suggests that condemnation is self-applied through not believing in Jesus in 3v18.

Jesus was into healing, freedom, liberty, care of the outcast and much beside of similar ilk. That is what we are called to be about too. We are to be a people of salvation, reconciliation, and inclusion.

As we make our way towards Holy Week and Easter let us think of what price, inconvenience, or effort we are prepared to pay for the "salvation" of another person. What can we do to liberate, encourage and bring healing and wholeness into another's life? In the doing of such we shall find fulfilment as it is part of the enriched life we have through our faith. Whatever the cost it is much less than what Jesus was prepared to do for each one of us.

We rejoice that God values each and every one of us the same – the value for our Salvation is Jesus who stretched out his arms in love for all.