

## EASTER MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR 2008

Greetings to you all.

I will talk a little about resisting temptation because we are constantly tempted and we find we behave in ways that sometimes trouble us. Most of the time it is because we cannot control the situation and we feel helpless. Sometimes it is because we feel we will lose something so fear may set in. We may be high achievers and we want to be seen as being perfect and doing the right thing according to our standards. This is not wrong BUT ! Lent allows us time to come before God and say once again as the psalmist does, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me'. (Psalm 51: 11)

We are aware through the scriptures that Jesus was fighting temptation constantly during his Lenten journey. Being the Son of God he had the advantage over us of having a divine side to him that allowed him to resist temptation. This does not give us an excuse but reminds us of our responsibility and interdependence on God.

With elections just prior to Easter, signs along our roadways, the TV advertisements and Radio announcements, there is much attention and speculation about election outcomes, to other issues. As our thoughts wonder from the economic boom in our Province to the homeless, the cutbacks and shortages in the Tertiary industry, the marginalized of our society, our minds and hearts are pulled in different ways to act. Yes we are ready. What does this readiness consist of; a Good Friday or an Easter day? The helplessness of death, destruction and displacement or the joy of a faith and hope that something good will come out of this.

We are still fighting a war in Afghanistan; all issues surrounding our sexuality still divide us and trouble our culture, our Church; obedience to authority is being constantly challenged; issues about poverty, taxation, social security, health care, a fair minimum wage, immigration and environmental concerns will not be solved with another election, by Easter 2008, by leaving a parish or the Anglican Communion. Amongst this tension and out of this chaos, could it be that the Spirit of God is moving and moulding a new creation?

I believe God is calling each one of us to come in faith with hope and not despair and together find an alternative method of solving these issues. It may not happen quickly, it may even take a long time. We as the baptized in Christ, as religious communities within our parishes must be prepared to negotiate with an open mind and heart. Not in fear but out of our fears. We need to think beyond our own short term individual selfish needs to long term human and communal transformation.

First and foremost we need to understand our religious tradition. We need to reclaim once again the great commission given by Jesus; 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you', (Matthew 18: 16 - 20) I believe it meant to teach people about Jesus Christ and the love and compassion He shows to the general public. It means to convert people's attitude toward Christianity from hostile to favorable. It means to convince people of the truth contained in Christianity. It means to invite people to adopt the Christian faith and join the messianic community. We need to reclaim other theological treasures that are well buried within our Church Tradition as well. Anglicanism has a rich heritage and has never been afraid of living in tension and amidst tension and sometimes chaos. The Christian Scriptures, Tradition and Reason say a lot about wealth and poverty, about war and peace, about justice and mercy and walking humbly with our God.

We cannot bury them in the tomb and become a people of Good Friday. We must resurrect those teachings and practices and release them as fresh as another Easter Day. We cannot afford to hang on to our religious places as ours alone. We need to open them up to the surrounding community members and become places where people know what is really going on. Recently we heard Dr. Sallie Mcfague speaking on how Church communities must speak out about what is happening to our environment. As we move beyond environmental issues we need to speak the truth in love and not as fear mongering nor with a superior attitude.

As we open ourselves to be able to hear and contain the truth we need to create places where people can talk about the hard things -the things we do not know or want to know, the places where faith tradition judges our

cultural priorities or are at odds with the intention of the Creator. We do this not with the intention of judging each other or the world but to find common meaning and to act together to resolve, to heal, ourselves, our brothers and sisters and the world. When we fail to do this, we will neither grow nor be able to find freedom of the resurrection. We cannot say 'He is not here, He is risen'. We will fall into temptation. Our goal is to resist temptation, identify and address issues and challenges of our age that affect the spiritual and moral fibre of our society.

My hope and prayer is that you will find freedom as we journey together and experience the joy of Easter.

As you and your family experience a holy journey in Lent may you experience the piercing strength of freedom and be filled with the enormous joy of the Resurrected Christ at Easter 2008.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Rev. Jagdutt Singh