



THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO GROW

REFLECTION POINTS 17 MAY 2020

READING 1: 1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13

“ 13If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

⁸Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. ¹³And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

READING 2

“ ⁴God is patient; God is kind; God is not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. God does not insist on God's own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶God does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. ⁷God bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

READING 3

“ ⁴I am patient; I am kind; I am not envious or boastful or arrogant ⁵or rude. I do not insist on my own way; I am not irritable or resentful; ⁶I do not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoice in the truth. ⁷I bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things.

REFLECTION

Some of you I know follow Richard Rohr's blog and subscribe to his daily prayers. I have taken this from one of these daily meditations to expand upon today's theme.

"Lady Julian of Norwich uses the idea of "oneing" to describe divine union. In chapter 53 of Revelations of Divine Love, she writes, "This beloved soul was preciousy knitted to God in its making, by a knot so subtle and so mighty that it is oned in God. In this oneing, it is made endlessly holy. Furthermore, God wants us to know that all the souls which will be saved in heaven without end are knit in this knot, and oned in this oneing, and made holy in this holiness."

Julian observes, "If I pay special attention to myself, I am nothing at all; but in general, I am, I hope, in the unity of love . . . for it is in this oneing that the life of all people consists". . . She reflects: "The love of God creates in us such a oneing that when it is truly seen, no person can separate themselves from another."

Like the message that lies behind the reading from 1 Corinthians 13, this idea of oneing is not something that sits undiscovered, but something that each of us needs to discover for ourselves. No-one can be taught to see the oneing that God creates in each of us, but once it is seen it is never unseen as it affects every part of our lives.

Julian lived in the 1300s as an anchoress which meant she lived in permanent seclusion in her cell attached to St Julian's Church, Norwich. She wrote about her visions of Jesus in a book "Revelations of Divine Love' – the earliest surviving book written in English by a woman. We don't know her real name or any other biographical details but she greatly influenced thinking at the time with her belief that God is compassion. She was a mystic and one of the first theologians to liken God's love to that of a mother drawing out the biblical texts.

If we think about the love that Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 13, it isn't something that we can merely educate people about but it may be something where we disciple each other.

We can accept with our knowledge heads that love is patient and kind, and with our faith hearts that God is patient and kind, but what of ourselves? How do we reach a place where we are not envious or arrogant, resentful or rude? How do we reach a point where we rejoice in the truth at all times rather than in wrongdoing? We know this is where we need to be as a follower of Jesus and in order to be 'in the unity of love', to use Julian of Norwich's words.

Ask yourself, what do I need in order to live out Paul's exhortation? Who do I need? Where can I change and what do I need to change? Paul often uses the metaphor of the body of Christ for the church – many parts but one body, members are the body and Christ is the head – but what does that mean for us at Manningham? How do we live as the body of Christ without being envious, arrogant, rude or resentful of the other parts of the body? How do we rejoice always in the truth?

And what does it really mean for us to reflect upon how God accommodates our lack of understanding without judgement or arrogance but a love that knows no end?

Come along with your ideas to the cuppa calls at 11.30am and 3pm plus a special 1pm cuppa call for new people to our congregation.