

Manningham Uniting Church 14th April 2024

Easter 3B

Texts: Acts 4: 32-35, Hebrews 1:3, John 20: 19-23

Theme: Where Art Thou?

The theme was introduced by a video of 'The Week with Charlie Pickering' (Your Cancelled - Easter April 2024 – Series 10 Episode 9) demonstrating how naïve and uninformed people are to the meaning of Easter.

Introduction

Quote: "One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art." (Oscar Wilde)

Quote: "There is one thing one has to have: either a soul that is cheerful by nature or a soul made cheerful by work love, art, and knowledge," (Friedrich Nietzsche)

Quote "Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time."
(Thomas Merton)

Quote: *Jesus is the reflection of God's art, a masterpiece of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful message* (Hebrews 1:3)

Preamble: The Art Instinct

Using documentary on "[How Art Made the World](#)"

First episode poses the question "what is it about humans in art that commonly distorts and exaggerates when depicting the human body?"

Illustration: [Venus of Willendorf](#)

As humans we are prone to puff ourselves up, and art is a big way we express this –

- to make others less than they are - in a kind of self-protection.
- to be what we think we would like to be - in a kind of self-promotion.
- to express what is important to us - in a kind of self-affirmation.
- both what is good and that which is not as good as we think it is.

The Venus of Willendorf holds high the role of fertility – which makes sense in a fraught and fragile nomadic existence where food and procreation is a never ending challenge.

How Humans Make Art and How Art Makes Us Human

The show goes on to show how art developed through the Egyptian and Greek societies.

Illustration: Egyptian art emphasising control and order (video & image)

Even though we may have a wired-in desire to gravitate to what is important to us, the culture we belong to can suppress, mitigate and distort this impulse.

Illustration: [Polykleitus Doryphoros](#) (video & image) - arguably the first artistic exact image of a human body.

Boring art is merely replication without the exaggeration of what's most important to us - however art is about much more (video & image).

Easter Sunday

Today we continue our celebration that Jesus is risen from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus represents the **exaggerated features we desire to be truly human** - not just what is important to us but what is important to God for us.

Just as boring art is the mere replication of objects, so boring Christian faith is the replication of the church and its ways. Boring religion is replication without transformation into what is important to God. Just as Jesus could not be trapped by a tomb neither should the church be trapped into mere replication - mere self-protection and self-promotion of what is important to us.

Challenge

If we are a people of the resurrection then our life and mission as a church community is to exaggerate what is truly human - Jesus resurrection tells us:- that what is hard wired in us will not limit us. That what is important in our society will not suppress us. That our vision for humanity and the world cannot be exaggerated enough!

Today as you continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus what will you seek to exaggerate about what it means to be truly human in your life?

Today as we continue to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus what will we seek to exaggerate about what it means to be truly human in our life?