Thy Kingdom Come Day 9: Celebrate

The Father’s Love

The reading for today is from Luke 15:20-24

So he (the son) set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe – the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

On Sunday our granddaughter will be 4 years old and ever since her brother had his birthday at the end of February when he was 2 she has been trying to decide what birthday cake she will have and her parents have been thinking about ‘the party’. Usually there would be balloons, presents, cards and the cake, and yes they can still be there. Even more importantly her friends and family should be there to celebrate her big day - but it’s not possible for this to happen and as I write there is still a thought to postpone the day for a few more weeks since she’s not yet aware of the date day to day.

During these weeks of lockdown many of you will have had birthdays and anniversaries which have had to be very low key, with perhaps a homemade special celebratory fatted calf rather than a trip out for a meal.

Are you a ‘huggy’ person? On the whole our family doesn’t go in for physical demonstrations of affection and perhaps because of this, to my shame, I have to confess that I often cringe at church if I see ‘Share the Peace’ on an order of service, I don’t know how far I’m supposed to go from my seat, will it be a hug or a handshake etc.

But when this lockdown is finally over and we are back in church and able to, I think sharing the peace might well take rather a long time as we greet one another and even the most reluctant among us may be found hugging for all we’re worth as we celebrate our communion together again.

Above the reading on today’s sheet is a wonderful picture of the Father embracing the long lost prodigal son/daughter. Those all encompassing arms holding up the child who has collapsed into them, finally at home, finally able to let go of all the guilt and shame, the worries and fears, the regrets and sorrows. Let’s hold that picture in our minds as we pray for our 5 friends today.

During these extraordinary times people are experiencing many different emotions and many are just longing for a hug, for an embrace that affirms that love is very much alive. We are challenged today to find a way to reach out to someone whom we may not have always been in tune with. Perhaps we could make a telephone call, write an email or even send a letter in the post, reaching out to them to let them know that love, especially God’s love is alive.

Prayer:

Loving God, please get my friends on the road where they see you running to meet them. Thank you that you welcome us with joy, however distant we are, however long we’ve been away. Amen.