

Dear Friends

Following Ascension Day last Thursday, our focus upon Jesus with his disciples on this planet Earth now moves to Jesus with our Father God in heaven.

At the end of this week - next Sunday 5 June - we shall celebrate Pentecost. Our focus will become 'God with us' through the Holy Spirit: the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Pentecost remembers the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem, and a marked change in the ability of the disciples to communicate the message of God's love to others.

At the heart of this lies our own relationship with God: God enabling us, opening our eyes to others, increasing our sensitivity to the concerns of others rather than simply concerns for our own selves and our small circle of family and friends.

The change is challenging as it requires us to set ourselves aside in favour of others - or at the very least a shift in that direction.

During this this week let us consider how we relate to everyone and everything which lies outside our current circle of contacts and activities.

How do we relate to the natural world around us? Is the natural world a source to us of joy, of wonder at the beauty and variety of creation, or do we regard the created world as a collection of things to be used and discarded?

How do we relate to people we do not know, those who are different to ourselves, having different ways of living and speaking in ways we do not understand? Do we regard them as threatening, or do we see them as enriching our understanding of what it is to be created and loved by God, examples of God's creativity in human evolution?

With the eyes of modern telescopes in space, we now appreciate more than ever before that our planet is vulnerable; that it is one of potentially billions of planets in the universe where life might exist. How does this new view of life in the universe change our appreciation of life on earth?

Let us pray to our Father in heaven that our eyes and mind might renew our relationships of all kinds. Let us open up to new ways of relating to our world, to plants, to animals and to people of all kinds and backgrounds: for in them we see God's love and creativity on full display.

Amen

Richard Hinder



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