

Traditional picture of the Christian life is being invited to join in the stately and loving dance of the Trinity. I'm not much of a dancer, though, Becca and I got married at 4pm in the afternoon so we didn't have to have a disco, so if you are into dancing or were then do feel free to hold on to that image- but another, similar image of being a Christian came to me last week at Becca's birthday party where an impromptu game of Frisbee happened on the field. People joined in as they arrived, of all ages, until people in their 60s and people in primary school were all playing together, involved, engaged, supportive, having fun, expressing themselves, and there was always room for more to join the game, and the more who came the better it was. Joyful and committed, individual and part of something bigger, together- a model for discipleship.

Our prime job as Christians is simply to be ourselves, to grow in knowledge of who we are by allowing ourselves to be loved into wholeness by God. To be able to accept that we are loved by God. Baptism and

the Eucharist are the key to our lives. We understand everything through those sacramental lessons, which teach us and show us the precious truth at our core which we are trying to live out more and more every day of our lives.

Which is what Jesus came to do- Gospels are full of the signs of life he does, taking what is fragile and partial and less than it should be and turning it into life. It's true of the people he calls, and of the healings he does, and all of his teaching, and it all starts with his first sign- of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. He rescues the moment by taking what is daily and normal and revealing the potential which lies within it.

Our job is simple- to accept the promises of our baptism, to hold tight to what we hear and see and get in the Mass and to live like that person and that people every day, in every decision, always.

And part of the way we do that is the life we share as a Church family. We support each other. We benefit from each other's ideas and input and experience

and connections. We are a people on pilgrimage together. We are standing in a field together, tossing round a Frisbee- but we are always a people walking towards God's Kingdom together, supporting each other, delighting in each other, moving towards something glorious ahead of us in the light of Christ. And we are not there yet- we are a process, a development, a learning community searching for signs of life and love all around us. Which, in turn, shows us more of the face of God.

And, as we march, we are not just searching for signs of love and life all around us- we are performing them, for each other and in the world around us. We are modelling how a community can live and care for each other and we are offering that love and healing with indiscriminate abandon. Funeral comment- didn't come to Church. Does not matter- and that's true of everything we can do and offer. Didn't matter to Jesus whether he had met the people who asked him for healing before and it doesn't matter to us either. Anyone who God loves and calls

and touches is welcome to join our pilgrimage, our game, and that is to say anyone and everyone.

And, in turn, looking for God at work in the world, working to heal and support and encourage alongside other people, teaches us more about what it is to be loved by God- we can't see God at work in other people's lives, and hear of their faith, and learn about the way God has worked in and around them, without that deepening our own sense of faith, our own sense of mattering infinitely to God. If our prime call is to learn to see ourselves as God sees us and then to live like it- and it surely is- then being in community is a vital third of that and so is living for God in the world and seeing what God is doing all around us by showing signs of life.

Today is Thanksgiving Sunday so let me tackle that head on. All that I've said so far is the context in which Thanksgiving Sunday is possible. It is our chance to reflect on the way we are thanking God for his love by the way we live, and to ask God whether we are contributing to leading and supporting the

life of the Church family as fully as we can at the moment, and whether we are doing as much to support and enable the Church's mission as we should be. Are we doing enough? Are we doing the right things? Or is there a sense that we would love to do something else, or something new, or something different, if only we knew what or how to ask?

Leaflet at the end- take away and pray about- our common life is better the more people who are involved and active and shaping our course- talk about two different areas of the Church's life now. [Andy, then Becca.]

You might be sat there thinking "I've only just got here", in which case I would urge you to hold on to the leaflet and look at it in three or six months' time when you have found your feet and feel at home. You might be sat there thinking I am already doing exactly what I want to be doing and it's amazing, in which case I will probably ask you to do part of the sermon in 2018. And you might be sat there thinking

"My life is so complex at the moment" or "I don't have any energy left" or "I'm not well" or "I can't deal with this" or "I wish I didn't feel too old to help."

Two things which are true for you and for everyone else- the list on the sheet are the extra ways we need people to help. But all of us make a contribution to the life of the Church in basic ways which follow on from our baptism- listen to each other, turn up regularly for Mass, pray and read the Bible each week, contribute realistically to our finances, phone people who are on the prayer list, and pray more.

And secondly, our prime call is to accept that we are loved and to find in each other and in our pilgrimage something of God. Perhaps you are at the moment at a stage where, after years of paying in, you have to take some money out of the bank, rely on others, be dependent a little. And that is what families do, what we are for, what we are here for. We all have seasons like that at some point. It's ok to be there. Through that, through your witness and honesty and courage,

we will all be encouraged for the journey and we will all see something of God's face. Signs of life happen in all different situations, even in the darkest of nights. Our prime call is to be God's baptised, Eucharistic, Easter people, to know ourselves loved by God.

But most of us, being in the normal run of life, will be fine to look seriously at the form, pray about it and then return it to the back of the Church or the office.

May we, together,