

## TO WHAT TUNE DO WE DANCE? All Souls' dtw 14.07.2024

2 Sam 6.14a David danced before the Lord with all his might.

Mark 6. 22a When his daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests.

I love to dance. I don't dance as much as I'd like to anymore. I never really learned to dance well. I think I dance better when I'm uninhibited, but I probably look absolutely stupid. There is a woman who must live in the Southern Vales I think, whom we have seen at a couple of venues over the years. She gets up on the dance floor alone and just dances in a circular motion, around and around in her long skirt during every song, totally oblivious to other people. Amazing! Deborah and I both like to dance when we get those rare opportunities. We love live music, especially having a drink or dinner where there are muso's. Our favourite music includes anything on solo piano, jazz, blues and rock. We discovered *The Old Bush Inn* at Willunga while I was off sick for many months in 2012 recovering from Staph. We would go to Saturday Mass at St Stephen's Willunga at 5.30pm and, when I was improving, then up the main street on some occasions to the Old Bush Inn which does great meals and had a different band every week. We'd stay for at least the first bracket followed by a lovely Sunday sleep-in: a luxury for us! But no dancing, and not much since with my funny hip and back. I love that saying, "Dance as if no one is watching". I bought a paper weight with those words in it. (I collect glass paper weights)

What motivates us to dance? To what tunes do *you* dance? Our readings today capture two very different dances for two very different reasons. In the dance of David we might feel the awe and wonder that David felt as he captured the rapture of God in his heart and soul, completely abandoning his body, mind and spirit as he leaped and danced before the ark virtually naked. Pure, uninhibited worship. In the dance of the girl often called Salome, we might feel the revulsion that John Baptist knew all too well in the abuse and corruption of the evil and gutless tyrant, Herod and his wife. This dance led to the beheading of John and almost certainly the permanent scarring of the girl who is abused in this act by her mother and her step-father. Graphic, perverted inhumanity.

Sydney Carter, in his famous song, calls Jesus 'The Lord of the Dance'. Dance then, wherever you may be. But beware. In this life given to each of us, we need so very carefully to discern the music before we dare to join in the dance. Here is a fitting, amusing but salutary story by the late Howell Witt from the series *Witt's End*:

*A group of American tourists, doing Europe, were being shown around the House of Lords in London, when suddenly, out of his office strode the Lord High Chancellor himself. Even in his underwear he is a formidable figure, but clothe him in the trappings of his office – the scarlet, buckled shoes and knee breeches, and, of course, the wig – and you have a most imposing personage indeed.*

*The American tourists were impressed tremendously. The brochures had said nothing about this and they reached for their cameras before this glorious apparition vanished from their sight. Meanwhile, the glorious apparition had caught sight of a friend some distance ahead and he called to him by name. "Neill!" he yelled. "Neill!" And they did. Kneel, I mean. To a man (and a woman), every one of those American tourists, their cameras forgotten, flopped down on their benders and they grovelled. I think it conjures up a glorious picture. All those sons and daughters of the*

*revolution whose ancestors had cast off the oppressive yoke of crowd and parliament now prostrate before his Lordship and all because they thought he was talking to them.*

*Yes, a delightful picture. "Neil", he said, and plonk! Down they go. But it is a disturbing picture too. People frequently talk about human beings as social animals or sexual animals or consumers or political animals, but rarely do you hear them talk about humans as worshipping animals. And worshipping animals they most certainly are: you ask those tourists.*

*You and I were created to spend eternity enjoying the worship of the one, true, living God. This life here was meant to train us for the life hereafter. It is here that we learn the craft of worship; here we discover the truth of the one, true God; here we get to know God and love God and serve God. And if we don't...? Well, the chances are that we'll settle for a false god and worship that. Like the woman who worships her new wardrobe (ed.) And then there's the bloke who worships his business. He says it's his business, he owns it. And he's the only person in his house who can't see the opposite is the case; the business owns him. Even his eight year old can see it. And the teenager who idolizes his car and prays fervently that he'll get his licence back.*

*Yes, we are made to worship and no matter how we might try to stifle it, now and again, we hear something that sounds like the command "Kneel" and down we go. Someone once said that normally, if a person of importance or majesty or charm came into a room, we would all stand up. But if Jesus Christ came into that room, we would all kneel down. And if we don't know why that is so, the chances are that we are kneeling before someone who doesn't deserve it. (Unq)*

John the Baptist paved the way for Christ with a call to repentance and a radical change in human behaviour. He danced to a very different tune than did the high and mighty. With John's call, any sense of privilege or immunity on the basis of religious or social position evaporated before the requirement of bearing good fruit – fruit that authenticates repentant living. 'Do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God' is one biblical prescription (Micah 6.8). John wore the garments of justice, kindness and humility as did the Christ he heralded. Let us come together in this radical dance, for all the world to see. Amen