

CHRISTIAN VOCATION Epiphany 2 All Souls' dtw (Baptism at 9.30am)

From our first reading: Isaiah 49. 1.1,5 'The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me...to be his servant'

And from our Gospel: John 1. 32 John the Baptist testified of Jesus in the River Jordan: "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.."

This very morning may we imagine in our faith's eyes the Spirit of God descending on little Noah like a dove as he is baptised in the waters of Christian birth. It was said of John Baptist at his birth, "What then shall this child become For indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. What, indeed, will Noah Lee Keserovic become?

John Henry Newman penned these words over a century and a half ago:

GOD HAS CREATED ME

To do some definite service

God has committed some work to me

Which has not been committed to another

I HAVE MY MISSION

I may never know it in this life

But I shall be told it in the next

I AM A LINK IN A CHAIN

A bond of connection between persons

God has not created me for naught

I shall do good – I shall do God's work

I shall be an angel of peace

A preacher of truth in my own place

While not intending it

If I do but keep God's commandments

THEREFORE I WILL TRUST IN GOD

God is present and active in the world, in the past, the present and the future. We can't always see the bigger picture, or see where God has been active, as events in our life unfold, but we can be assured that God is with us in what seems like a large jigsaw puzzle. God holds all the seemingly unconnected *pieces* together until we can see that somehow it does all fit together. God holds *us* together when we feel the pieces don't fit as they should'.

Astronomers talk about the dark invisible matter that glues the seemingly unconnected pieces of our universe together. For one thing we are talking about a virtual eternity of light years in breadth and depth, and then a whole new dimension, unlike the three-dimensional framework in which we live. Just fascinating, or as the young people say, awesome! The psalmist had an extremely limited understanding of the universe over two and a half thousand years ago, yet could exclaim:

I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous,

Your handmade sky-jewelry,

Moon and stars mounted in their settings.

Then I look at my micro-self and wonder,

Why do you bother with us?

Why do you take a second look our way? (Ps 8. The Message)

Before the foundation of the world, Noah and each one of us were in the divine scheme of things. And in the fullness of time, each one of us were fearfully and wonderfully made; carved uniquely in the palm of God's hand and placed here within the divine jigsaw, the Community of God. Can you feel the wonder of it all; can you behold the glory? God does and smiles and says, "This is very good". He smiles on Noah today, his parents and godparents and says, "This is very good". And there is great joy in heaven!

The next thing is to connect with God's Mission. As we heard from Meagan Schwarz just before Christmas, God is a missionary God! We simply need to allow ourselves to be instruments, like Isaiah, for what God wants to say and do, just as in those words of John Newman. Some of you will already know how you serve in God's Church. But if you don't, just wait on God in prayer for some direction or even ask one of our leadership team what may be required. There will be something 'with your name on it'. I wrote a prayer for the Order of St Lazarus National Chapter in Adelaide in 2022. This could also be a beautiful prayer for Noah.

Divine Love

you have carved me in the palm of your hand

Form me more and more into your likeness

Give me a willing spirit to desire only what you desire

and to serve in the name of the One who came to serve

that I may seek always to reflect your abundant life and grace

Amen

Furthermore, St John records in our Gospel today that Andrew first found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. (John 1.41, 42) There is plenty of room here at All Souls' Let us increase our desire to invite others, to be warm and welcoming,

particularly to strangers and newcomers. St Paul gives us the recipe in Romans: 'Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God' (15.7). Let us not be weary in building one another up in love.

I'll give John Newman the final word as well:

For in truth we are not called once only, but many times; all through our life Christ is calling us. He called us first in Baptism; but afterwards also; whether we obey His voice or not, He graciously calls us still. If we fall from our Baptism, He calls us to repent; if we are striving to fulfil our calling, He calls us on from grace to grace, and from holiness to holiness, while life is given us. Abraham was called from his home, Peter from his nets, Matthew from his office, Elisha from his farm (Ed: Newman doesn't include any women so I will make this interpolation: Martha from her pots; Mary from the empty tomb)...we are all in course of calling, on and on, from one thing to another, having no resting-place, but mounting towards our eternal rest, and obeying one command only to have another put upon us. Christ calls us again and again, in order to justify us again and again – and again and again, and more and more, to sanctify and glorify us. AMEN.