

Funeral The Rev'd Linda Anchell

The Feast of St Monica – 27 August 2019

A reading from the prophet Isaiah (25:6-10)

- ⁶ On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow,
of well-matured wines strained clear.
- ⁷ And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
- ⁸ he will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for
the Lord has spoken.
- ⁹ It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God;
we have waited for him, so that he might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.
- ¹⁰ For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

For the word of the Lord

Gospel according to John (20:11-18)

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

The Recessional

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace
according to thy word.

were there in front of me, but I had wandered away from myself. And if I could not find my own self, how much less could I find you? For Augustine the light of God shining into our lives can make a story and make meaning out of the seeming chaos of unhappiness, of wandering, of hurt. In this story that we glimpse in Confessions, In Linda's life that we celebrate today and in our own lives, nothing is left out. In the midst of the joys and the sorrows, the highs and lows...God is always present calling us home.

When Linda was admitted to Clare Holland House she asked me that question Monica had asked 'What is left for me to do in this world?' She and I spoke about this at some length, we looked back at Linda's life and ministry on how it had changed and evolved as she had changed, physically and spiritually. Like Augustine we too found God as she told her story. Not once did Linda question God's presence, but like Augustine she spoke about her journey home, about her searching. Linda continued to serve as a Deacon to us, she proclaimed the word and prayed as slowly, very slowly her life ebbed away, she showed us how to die and reminded us of God's presence along the way.

From the cry of the people of Israel in exile in Babylon in the prophecy of Isaiah, waiting for God. To the tears of Mary Magdalene asking where have you laid my Lord? to Linda's life of searching and waiting we hear the resounding word of God, I am with you always, in exile and liberation, in pain and comfort, in grief and consolation, in life in and death. As we take leave of our sister Linda let us not be tempted to simply seek the consolation of God, we miss so much if we do this, but let us seek the God of consolation who is with us always, and goes before us in the person of his son Jesus to prepare a home for us.

I'm going to leave the last word with St Augustine in this purple passage: "How late I came to I love you, O beauty so ancient and so fresh, how late I came to love you! You were within me while I had gone outside to seek you. Unlovely myself, I rushed towards all those lovely things you had made. And always you were with me, and I was not with you. All these beauties kept me far from you - although they would not have existed at all unless they had their being in you. You called, you cried, you shattered my deafness. You sparkled, you blazed, you drove away my blindness. You shed your fragrance, and I drew in my breath and I pant for you. I tasted and now I hunger and thirst. You touched me, and I burn with longing for your peace."

May that peace now be Linda's as she comes home to that place which is indeed the peace of God. Amen.