

Funeral – Peter Roy Andersson

Readings

A reading from the second letter of Paul to Timothy (4:6b-8)

...the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

For the word of the Lord

A reading from the gospel according to Mark (12:28-34)

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any question.

For the word of the Lord

Homily

Today the Church in the Anglican tradition commemorates the lives of two men, Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley both English Bishops, both executed on this day in 1555 during the reign of Mary I. These were extraordinarily difficult times; the brutal and terrifying birth pangs of a new way of being Church. What would emerge over the next 150 years was a Church that endeavoured to find a middle way between the ancient texts and traditions and the new thinking of reformation, renaissance and enlightenment. We are still trying! But I believe *this is* loving God and neighbour and I believe this is where we find salvation in its fullest.

These last few days I have been listening to George Gershwin. His writing epitomises that coming together that via media of the disciplines of classical

music with its structures and formulas, its orthodoxy and the new genre of Jazz, pushing boundaries with unscripted improvisation. Indeed we will very soon a rendition of Gershwin's Prelude No.2 what he called 'a sort of blues lullaby' a piece in which we can find sounds both classic and modern.

This middle way is what we seek in our Christian ethic, ways both ancient and modern. It is not simply the performance of a script. Christians do not simply act out scripture or try to repeat a golden era of the past. Instead they improvise — the only term that adequately describes the desire to cherish a tradition without being locked in the past. We are called to faithfully improvise on the Christian tradition in our own time. In improvisation whether in theatre or in music actors and musos seek to develop trust in themselves and one another in order that they may conduct unscripted dramas or music without fear. This is life lived faithfully: building trust, overcoming fear, conducting relationships, and making choices - all without a firm script, but with a solid foundation of texts and traditions.

The psalmist tells us, in older translations of the Bible, that our span of life is three score years and ten or four score if we have the strength. Peter clearly had the strength and I am very grateful for that as I have very much enjoyed Peter's companionship over the last years or so. As I am sure you can imagine Peter was not one of those parishioners who immediately made himself known to me. His was a quiet unassuming way and I enjoyed his company when I visited him in his unit; he was both 'the ancient of days' and yet quite modern in many ways. He enjoyed the company of young and old was always kind and gentle. He loved God and neighbour and in this ethic is the assurance of salvation. May he rest in peace and may we who remain continue to be faithful in our love of God and improvise in our love of neighbour and in this wonderful music of living, find everlasting life. Amen.