

Head and Heart

4th February 2024 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings

Isaiah 40: 21 - 31

Psalm 147: 1 - 11,20c

1 Corinthians 9: 16 - 23

Mark 1: 29 - 39



The First Dimension

Plans for further exploration into space are becoming regular news items as science searches to know more about the origins of life and everything else everywhere. I find myself excited by it and yet I know so little about it. I am still trying to fathom my own space in our world. When it comes to the *Super String Theory*, speaking of at least ten dimensions in our universe I retreat into my three-dimension life – four if we allow for the time dimension! For the moment I shall return to my weekly *simple* thoughts from our Bible readings, beginning this time with Isaiah's words – '*Don't you know? Haven't you heard?* They suggest similar words which God spoke to Job near the end of his drama. He and his companions, who struggled to help him in his disastrous life circumstances, had come to the end of their argumentative search for a meaning to it all. It was then that God took Job aside and asked him, '*Where were you when I planned the world?*' meaning, have you not discovered the '*God Dimension*' behind and beyond everything?' Do you not know the divine creator, holy beyond any comparison or explanation, the source of all life whose thoughts will blow the minds of people for ages to come, and yet the one who is known, in the spiritual dimension, as the strength of the weak who dare to trust him! I want to learn about vast universes, galaxies, black holes and more. It's like wanting to explore all those dusty attics in an old yet often renovated family home. I want to know more just so long as the learning keeps bringing me to my knees in the God-dimension. Like an ant before an angel, to quote Isaiah again!

Even more wonderful is our Christian knowledge of Jesus as our God-given link into the primary dimension. That was the experience of a large proportion of the people in Capernaum from today's gospel reading. Already amazed by the authority of Jesus' revolutionary teaching and having seen his miracles of spiritual power in the synagogue, there was much more to come for the whole town. First there was a homely miracle at Peter's house. It ensured that *Sabbath dinner* would not be too late! News spread quickly through an already excited community. At sundown when everyday life resumed, crowds gathered round Simon's place expecting Jesus to help them and to heal all manner of infirmity.

He did! We could say many of them felt as though they were in touch with another dimension. They were! Some may have realised even then, how there would be serious and seemingly fatal consequences after increasing conflicts with authority. Jesus had come from God with the authority of his dimension. Those closest to him were to learn how he WAS the God-dimension – Immanuel!

The verses at the end of the reading are important too. Next morning Jesus' friends found him in a lonely place – praying – linking into his power source. It explains how his next day's work continues in the same vein. He brought blessing to many, while rousing opposition and argument from some whose rigid religious concepts and material profits were being challenged. That led to determined antagonism to what they failed to understand as God's plan to revitalise his people through repentance and a new-dimension way of living. In the words of Isaiah which became the inaugural Kingdom message for John the Baptist and Jesus, '*turn life around and enter into the realm of God's Spirit.*'

This dimension of life which Jesus called *The Kingdom of God*, became freely available to all when he was born – God with us in his own world, living our life, dying our death, sacrificing himself in love to prove a Father's gracious reconciliation with us. Then, at Pentecost and regularly from then on, by the gift of his Spirit, creating a love-dimension people called *The Church*! 'Don't you know?' 'Have you not heard?' There's a whole new dimension to life for all who put their trust in God, through Jesus!

Paul speaks of his own part in sharing the gospel message in Corinth. As one called to be Christ's servant, he knows himself to be under orders to preach to all who have not yet heard and do not know. He is ready to slave for this, prepared to be all things to all people whatever it may cost him personally. It is all part of everyday living in the God-dimension.



Prayer – based on Psalm 147

Lord, when I think about you counting and naming the stars,
while healing and blessing humble people
and comforting the broken-hearted
I realise your true greatness, wisdom, and power.
It makes me want to sing your praise,
In the thunderstorm of falling rain or the soft tones of gentle breezes
when words are not enough.
Your pleasure is in the love and trust of my humble heart. I thank you.

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