

## 10th January 2021 First in Ordinary Time

### Readings

Genesis 1 : 1 - 5

Psalm 29

Acts 19 : 1 - 7

Mark 1 : 4 - 11



### My God !!

Today's psalm – psalm 29 – is a favourite of mine. I must have made that fact obvious because two friends in one of my congregations presented me with a framed copy of it in beautiful calligraphy. I think I grew to love storms when living in tropical Africa – sitting on the balcony watching an incessant electrical turmoil lighting the whole sky like an extravagant firework display. The psalm is a description of God in the images of a storm. It pictures the whole event from the distant anticipatory rolling thunder, through frightening, destructive wind and lightening to a final subdued calm as it rumbles away across the hills. From disturbing awe to comforting peace these words draw prayerful minds to think of God.

The psalm accompanies the Creation theme in the Genesis scripture. In total darkness, blotting out the faintest glimmer of light, the earth rolls on round a hidden sun, desolate, formless and volcanic, engulfed by gigantic ocean swells and towering spumes of fire and steam from within its heart. Then came the even greater thunder of its creator's voice – God calling for '*Light!*' And so the creative work was under way because everything waits for that moment when the sun breaks through – the separating of day and night – dark and light – where the Spirit of God is the source of light and life. Mountains rise – streams flow – forests, grasslands and deserts cover valleys and plains - flowers bloom – animals find their place and men and women are born, to be moved by the glory of sunset and sunrise, to love as God loves them – to be like him! My pleasure, like that of God on the first day is to be overwhelmed by the awesome wonder of it all.

This year we shall be hearing and speaking a lot about our world environment and the issues of climate change. It will culminate with the World Climate Conference to be held in Glasgow in November. As God's people we have a responsible privilege to be informed and involved about these issues. I believe our Christian approach to them must be undergirded with that same sense of awe, wonder and gratitude for all that began when the Word was heard above the tumult of earth's voices – when God spoke, and the sun came out!

The scriptures continue on from these first stories of the beginning and God's word - *Let there be Light!*' We can trace the theme through the whole Bible as God opens minds and hearts to his truth - to the light of wisdom. Prophets listen and learn, like people scrabbling for candles when the power seems to have cut out, until the pivotal moment arrives when the Creator enters his own creation in the human life of Jesus - *and the Word became Flesh*. In today's Gospel reading we are told of God speaking again at the baptism of Jesus to confirm *-this is my Son who will open your hearts and minds to my true nature - to sharing my wisdom, my truth, my love*. We saw the creation moment again when Jesus was engulfed in a violent Galilee lake-storm. His terrified, awestruck friends saw him restore his creation with the command - *Peace!* and their eyes and minds were opened in a glimpse of who he really was. The light continued to grow - ready for the Pentecost moment of powerful wind and storm when again the Spirit of God moved across the face of the earth beginning the universal spread of his enlightening Good News.

The apostle Paul summed it up in words he wrote to Christians in Corinth (2,4,6) *'It is God who said 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone into our hearts to enlighten them with the knowledge of his glory, the glory on the face of Christ.'*

We have a new year ahead in which to enjoy our natural world and its awesome Creator. May it encourage our concern for our environment and open our minds to God's truth.

One last word. May the peace and sense of purpose which follows when the storm has passed, be our faith-hope throughout the year ahead of us.

### **A Prayer**

Lord, you reveal yourself to us in the glories of your creation.  
Let us hear you in fearful thunder;  
feel you in the peaceful embrace of nature's gentle stillness;  
be aware of you in cruel frost and in life-giving sunshine;  
in the grief of selfish humanity  
and in the tender touches of reconciling love.



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