

Mary & Love

Today we have lit the 4th candle on the Advent wreath, the candle of love.

Love that most excellent of things.

Come Lord Jesus... come love divine... come down upon us.

Love of God intrude and penetrate our lives with your Spirit, your love as you intruded and penetrated the life of Mary with your Spirit and your love.

Come love divine into our lives afresh.

May love stir our hearts from indifference towards you, towards others and towards the world.

May love like a baby grow inside us and be born in us.

May love fan the flames of hope, peace and joy in our lives and shine on those who are in our sphere of influence.

Mary is an inspiration and example and a model for the whole church...

Her love of God and her interactions with God... through the angel, the resulting trust, commitment, obedience, and submission are a model for us. Despite uncertainty, anxiety, possible awful consequences... Mary trusted in God's promises, was obedient to God's word of invitation in her life, surrendered to the mystery before her, and committed herself to be part of God's plan of salvation in Jesus. She said YES to God, YES to love.

Her openness, her receptivity to God... to divine love in inspiring.

Like Mary we too can be open to the possibilities of God. Western culture and philosophy has emphasised rational control/autonomy and self-sufficiency rather than interdependence... and at times we culturally have an unhealthy scepticism and cynicism.... unfortunately this rational control and autonomy and a resulting propensity to satisfy self is at the expense of being open and receptive to the Holy One... sadly we can be less open and willing to embrace the possibilities of God...

The Spirit of God... the love of God invites us/ beckons us to move beyond control, autonomy and independence and unhealthy cynicism... to reach out of ourselves and beyond ourselves!! AND by this I don't mean achievement or fulfilment of ambition but by taking the risky step of seeking of the heights depths and breadth of God... the things of God... having an openness to what is possible in God yet impossible in and of ourselves alone.

And yet we don't have to reach very far for God is with us.

Indeed, as I said on Wednesday the words and resulting experience that Mary received through the Angel from God are words and an experience for the whole Church.

“Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you”

“Do not be afraid,”

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;”

Mary has a question, "how can this be?" We too will have questions

Mary's response is inspiring ... openness... a receptivity to cooperate with the possibilities and creativity and transforming love of God.

She opens up her heart... and she opens up her whole being to the Spirit of God. Her "yes" is probably the church's greatest example after Christ of yielding to the love of God. She moves beyond rational control, independence and any kind of cynicism and scepticism to co-operate with God... for the seemingly impossible to become possible.

"Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

What can I give him, poor as I am?

This Christmas say YES to God, open your heart and life afresh to him. May the love of God be poured out afresh on you... in you. May the Holy Spirit come upon you and the whole church... the power of the Most High overshadow you... and the Word be planted deep within you. The Word of Life... to grow in you, to show in you and be lived out... passed on.