

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

LUKE – Companion on 'the Way of Jesus'

28 / 29 November 2009

Dear Friends

Each of us sees things through our own personal 'lens', 'prism' or 'filter', and the same is true of the gospel writers. Each has his own preoccupations and emphases as he records the life and teaching of Jesus. As we farewell Mark and begin the new liturgical year by opening the Gospel of Luke, we discover images that the other evangelists do not record such as the accounts of the Annunciation and Visitation.

Luke did not know Jesus personally, so he drew on the memories of those who knew Jesus in his public ministry. His gospel is the result of shared faith and his questions may help us as we too seek to know him better – What is Jesus like? What is his message? What is the God of Jesus like? How can people come to believe in Jesus and experience the glory of God?

In Luke, Jesus gives special attention to the outcast and the needy. Many of his parables and incidents involve women. He shows Jesus at prayer more often than the other evangelists. In this gospel, Jesus reveals God as compassionate, generous and forgiving, and raises the decency and dignity of the marginalised. Luke will be our worthy companion during the weeks and months ahead.

Each gospel is coloured by faith in the Resurrection of Jesus, and so we don't need to pretend at Christmas that Christ hasn't come or hasn't risen from the dead. We do need to open our hearts to let Jesus enter that place where we may not have allowed him to go before.

What better companion could we have than Luke to guide us through Advent, the season of longing and expectation, as we prepare to remember and celebrate the birth of Christ. During this season we have the familiar images of darkness and light, the darkness of human weakness and sin, the suffering of so many in our world, the crimes against life, the bleakness of life so many people know.

The thread of light is gradually woven as we gather around the Advent wreath and light the candles each Sunday in preparation for the splash of brilliant light that bathes us in our celebration of Christ at Christmas. Perhaps an Advent wreath at home could help our longing to grow in the next few weeks.

Jesus came into the world and he is still present. We need to recognise him at work in our world and our living and find the real joy he brings. Advent is about re-focusing, reflecting on our experience, learning about the God who is, as Augustine so beautifully puts it, 'closer to me than I am to myself.'

Luke leads us through a variety of images with his word pictures of the end-time, the prophetic figure of the Baptist, our call to rejoice, and Mary's visit to Elizabeth which reminds us that we all must be bearers of Christ in our service of others.

Remember - *'What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God.'*

Fr Dave