

## Tuesday Reflection 17.11.20

“My Kingdom is not of this world”

What does this mean? Reflecting on it, it seems to me to suggest that God’s (Christ’s) Kingdom does not subscribe to many worldly values, and perhaps we can try and identify some of these and then turn them upside down.

Many of our worldly values are wedded to the notion of ‘success’ - but a very limited notion of ‘success’ which assumes that there are going to be ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ - and as we observe in the USA at present, the dividing line is a very fine one, and yesterday’s ‘winners’ are today’s ‘losers’. Failure is often seen as the opposite of success - but failure is necessary for growth; if we do not ‘fail’, then we will never grow.

The ‘world’ espouses the notion of perfection - or at least of perfectability - which is one of the driving forces behind the cosmetics industry! If something is not ‘perfect’, there must have been a ‘mistake’ somewhere - but ‘mistakes’ are actually learning opportunities - we learn from our mistakes, so mistakes are an essential part of learning and progress.

So, ‘failure’ and ‘mistakes’ are essential elements in human growth and learning.

If we come away from the human sphere, there is an idea that evolution is the consequence of errors in genetic transmission - that without these errors we would still be swimming around in the primordial soup, and that without these errors there would be no biodiversity.

The third worldly value is concerned with death. Death is either denied or it is seen simply as the ‘end of life’. As Christians, however, we know that death is a reality and that it is not ‘the end’. We accept the inevitability and necessity of death, but see it as the beginning of new life. In biological terms, too, death is seen as the prerequisite for life.

So let us celebrate ‘failure’, ‘mistakes’ and death as necessary for the continuation of life. This does not mean that we take a casual or lackadaisical approach to them, but that we embrace them wholeheartedly, incorporate them into our lives and use them as opportunities for growth and learning.

One final word - ‘My Kingdom is not of this world’ does not mean that God’s Kingdom is in some far and distant ‘Beyond’. We have to take the words of the Lord’s Prayer seriously: “Thy Kingdom come (i.e) Thy will be done *on Earth*....” The Kingdom of God starts here.

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