

Christ the King November 2012

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Today we focus on Christ our King. So often we have depictions of Jesus suffering on the cross and we can end up focusing our thinking on the 'Jesus of Calvary'. But the Jesus of Calvary is only part of the power of the gospel, giving way to the risen Jesus and then the glorious Jesus who ascends and takes His rightful place in heaven. The one depiction we have of Jesus on the cross at St Margaret's is Christ the King, crowned in glory, victorious on a cross. This is above our heads as we leave the Church foyer and enter the waiting world. It is the glory of a dying, yet resurrected Jesus that helps us to walk with hope into a world that is hurting and lost. It is the risen, ascended and crowned Jesus who helps resource us at Pentecost so that we not only walk with hope but with power from on high.

Today as an Anglican communion, there is a sense that we are perhaps not walking with ease. Many are feeling bruised from the General Synod voting on women Bishops. So much has already been shared in the media that I am cautious of adding further to the debate but would simply add some reflections to help us reflect and pray and perceive the immediate path ahead.

- Whilst the process has been painful and frustrating, we must recognise that the vote has not been successful and pray for folks on both sides of the debate who are frustrated and grieved by the process.
- We should be praying for those who lead and reconcile us at this challenging time.
- We should step away from the media's emotive agenda, which seeks to polarise and simplify a complex discussion.
- We should return to the Lord in prayer and be refreshed by the word of life and the Spirit of peace.

As a Church we may feel that not much has changed, but Rowan has pointed out that there has been a "loss of credibility in the world's eyes". We are called not to conform to the patterns of this world but called to be like Christ in the renewing of our minds. The mind of Synod has spoken, the Bishops and clergy are in clear favour of women Bishops but this has not been fully resolved within the Laity not necessarily in relation to women Bishops but perhaps more acutely in relation to those who require assurance over support for those who, in clear conscience could not accept a female episcopate.

I still believe that the issue of women Bishops will resolve in time. My passion is that the energy generated by such discussions should be vastly eclipsed by the energy of the Holy Spirit as the Church reaches out to those who are strangers to Christ our King. Having experienced the pain of Tuesday, let us live out the joy of Easter Sunday empowered by Pentecost through Christ our King.

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