

Reflection for Mothering Sunday/Confirmation

Ephesians 5: 8-14

John 9: 1-11

‘May the light of Christ scatter the fear and darkness from our hearts and minds’

Our readings this morning pick up on the theme of coming out of darkness into light. They fit in well with this the first day of British Summer Time, when we say goodbye to the long dark nights of winter and with the clocks move forward with the hope of a good summer ahead of us in our hearts and minds. The readings also fit in well with the two other events of this Sunday’s worship here at the Canongate namely Mother’s Day and the ordinance of Confirmation and admission to the Lord’s Supper.

Mothers are often remembered as those special people in our lives that do indeed protect us from the darkness and scatter any of our fears. They build palaces of love and safety for us to return to in our own minds. Yet ultimately their role of nurture and care is to prepare us to fly solo as we make our own way and hopefully not too many mistakes in life. They prepare us to engage with the bright lights and all that the world has to offer. The philosopher Nietzsche pointed out that;

He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying

Just as the clocks move us forward into summer so too mothers prepare us to move forward and play our part in the world.

It is this ‘playing our part in the world’ that takes us forward this morning to reflect upon confirmation. There are so many different ways that we can make our way in the world and there is a huge amount of pressure on youngsters particularly to keep moving forward and not to look back in case they fail to seize the moment, that opportunity that will not come round again.

To join a confirmation class these days is very counter culture. Not only does it require the discipline of putting time aside to stop the clock, to explore the life and work of the Church it also requires looking back. Looking back in this case to one’s baptism when more often than not it was our parents who brought us for the first time into the family of the Church. But as we look back to this beautiful sacrament, we pause, we stop, we reflect, we pray so that we can move forward in the light of Christ that does indeed open our eyes to the possibility of all that being a practising Christian means in today’s world. The life of Christ teaches us how we too can play our part in the world by following in his footsteps.

Our eyes are opened just as the Blind Man’s were in the Gospel reading. Now Julia I can scatter a little of the fear and darkness from your heart by assuring you that your eyes are not about to be spiritually opened by Neil using spit and mud to place on your face. No rather he will shortly confirm you with the Holy Spirit. That same spirit in the form of a dove that descended on Christ at his baptism, that same spirit that journeyed with him into the darkest places of temptation as he was led into the desert to be tempted by the Devil – those 40 days that we commemorate during the season of Lent.

As you confirm the vows that were taken on your behalf at your baptism you do so in the knowledge that you now prepare to move forward having taken ownership of your faith to find your own place and role in Christ’s Church. You will always I know have the support and love of your family and today you will always be in the prayers of the congregation here at the Canongate. Yet most especially of all you will also partake and share in the Lord’s Supper the sacred meal that brings us closest to Christ and reminds us that as we prepare to go forward we

do so in his total love for all of us and in his light as he lifts up his face once more to shine on us this first day of a new British Summer Time. Along with nature we prepare to be born again