

- Genesis 12.1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4.1-5, (6-12) 13-17;
John 3.1-17 or Matthew 17.1-9

One can feel for Nicodemus seeking out Jesus for enlightenment, understanding, only to be confronted with the idea of being 'born again? Today we'd ask Google only to be given thousands of options to choose from. My choice of explaining Born Again, would be *Kintsugi* – the Japanese art of repairing a broken pot by joining the pieces together with gold, with us as the pot, and the Spirit of God being the gold that holds us together.

- Pray for understanding and welcoming being born again – the Holy Spirit into our lives.
- Give thanks for the work and witness of the Anglican Church of Japan, the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*.

Text: Bob Randle Holy Hermits Online St John's Cathedral, Brisbane © Anglican Board of Mission, 2023

Reflections

During my Theological training, Fr Michael Trainor spoke about the Gospel of Mark being like "a ripping yarn!" As I learnt more about the gospels, I saw them through, "Anne's Thinking Hats of the Bible":

- Matthew is great for those who like to know boundaries and have clarity, the "How to be a good Christian"
- Mark is a "ripping yarn" (M. Trainor), "And then they went here! And then they went there!"
- Luke (and Acts) is wonderful for the "whole picture" people
- John is full of 'images', scenarios that unveil the narrative in a completely different way again

I find this helps with this Johannine reading. Nicodemus wants to know. He asks questions with specific intention. Jesus draws him to 'see' deeper, beyond the obvious. Nicodemus sees the 'concrete' proof – the miracles. Jesus speaks of the Spirit as the wind. Nicodemus wants reason, and asks "how", the 'but why?'. Jesus speaks of experiencing new life, born into a new way of being, of lifting our gaze towards the love of God, rather than looking for signs or symbols. Sometimes, our anxiety for details diminishes our ability to gaze towards the image unfolding before us. May we remember:

'For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge,
but to be its saviour.'



HOLY INNOCENTS

ANGLICAN CHURCH BELAIR

Readings - Sunday 5 March – Second Sunday in Lent

Sentence

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

John 3.16

Collect

God of mercy,
you are full of tenderness and compassion,
slow to anger, rich in mercy,
and always ready to forgive:
grant us grace to renounce all evil and to cling to Christ,
that in every way we may prove to be your loving children;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 12.1-4a

¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' ⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills:
but where shall I find help?

- ² My help comes from the Lord:
who has made heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not suffer your foot to stumble:
and he who watches over you will not sleep.
- ⁴ Be sure he who has charge of Israel:
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord himself is your keeper:
the Lord is your defence upon your right hand;
- ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day:
nor shall the moon by night.
- ⁷ The Lord will defend you from all evil:
it is he who will guard your life.
- ⁸ The Lord will defend your going out and your coming in:
from this time forward for evermore.

Second Reading: Romans 4.1-5, 4.13-17

¹ What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. ³ For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' ⁴ Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵ But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. ¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴ If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. ¹⁶ For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.
For the word of the Lord, *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Reading: John 3.1-17

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' ³ Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' ⁵ Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things? ¹¹ 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷ 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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