

## **2<sup>nd</sup> before Lent**

I wonder how many of you are wondering why we have today's very graphic chapter 4 from the Book of Revelation – and whether there are any links with our equally graphic Gospel reading? Can we compare Revelation's vision of heaven with Luke's dramatic storm on the lake?

I found myself re-opening John Sweet's famous commentary on Revelation to allay my own sense of panic, and whether I could discover some links or clues. That's the wonderful thing about comparing and contrasting different texts, as well as quite different contexts.

So back to Chapter 4, Fr Sweet said this: "The most important part about this chapter is the picture it gives, or rather does not give of God. 'John knows that to ordinary mortals the presence of God becomes real not through direct vision, even in the mind's eye, but through the impact of those to whom God is the supreme reality. So he allows his readers to look on the Eternal Light through the mirror of the worshipping host of heaven'. God is the centre of the scene, and of the book."

Another commentator has summarised this by saying that 'God's sovereignty is depicted first as that of Creator of all things, then as the Redeemer, in process of restoring his universal sovereignty on earth. Because he is Creator, God can be expected to renew his whole creation in the end.'

So there you have it! The link and thread is there but (if you were me) you may prefer, like the frightened disciples in their

boat, to call for the coastguard or at least, to put on your lifejacket rather than reach for a Bible commentary! But I jest. God is very much at the centre of the storm, as God is also at the centre of its calming: 'Be still and know that I am God.'

That's good advice and not only if you think you are drowning! Our belief and trust in the God of all creation is intimately linked with our belief and trust in the throne of heaven. It is the place where we will be redeemed and enjoy the delights of eternity. There is nothing fanciful or embarrassing about that, because from Genesis right through to Revelation, God is our beginning and our end, our strength and stay. God is the centre of every imaginable scene and of every sacred text or scripture.

I was privileged to join some of my Governors last week on an RE monitoring visit around St Mary's Primary which included visits to Foundation stage, year 2 and year 3. Nearly everything has to be 'evidenced' and written down (just in case you bump into an inspector or two), but I was pleased to read this subsequently: "Pupils enjoy and value RE...Good use of vocabulary, particularly in Year 2 that were confidently using 'compassion' and 'mercy'...The children were particularly engaged in the Foundation Stage lesson which involved thinking about who you would tell your worries to; learning that Christians tell their worries to God; and using a candle as reflection."

These are just a few snippets or 'golden moments' and I mention them because here, too, God is at work in the

everyday: at the centre of our shared enquiry and search for truth, for faith, and for courage to believe: 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Let us pray: **Creator Eternal,**

**History and time are yours:**

**Reach into our hearts**

**In love and compassion,**

**So that your Spirit of truth may live in us now**

**and always;**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**