

GENEROSITY BEYOND MEASURE

Sermon preached at 10.00am Sung Eucharist
with Admission of Children to Communion,
St. Edmundsbury Cathedral
9 October 2016

For this talk, children came to the front of the congregation.

Greetings, Earthlings. Who can remember their summer holiday?

My family had a wonderful time in Cornwall. One week we stayed in Portreath in a house with an amazing view of the beach. We did body boarding and jumped off the harbour wall. We spent a lot of time just watching the waves: one day very flat and still; another day huge great waves smashing in.

At low tide there were caves to walk in and rock pools to look in. I love anemones: how they close up into little jellies and open out with all their tentacles to filter the water. They just sit there waiting for the tide to come back in and trusting that the sea will bring more food.

We went for a wonderful walk along the coastal path - really high cliffs to lean over. And we could see for miles along the coast. I love those huge views by the sea: they stretch your mind and expand your soul.

So Earthlings, have you noticed how the earth provides everything in our lives: food, clothing, all the contents of the objects and gadgets in our lives. The natural world around us is amazing: all the creatures, animals, birds, plants, insects. There is endless generosity and abundance in all life. Our bodies themselves come from the earth. And one day our bodies will return to the womb of the earth. This is a great mystery. We are fruit of the earth, able to appreciate its beauty. We are earthlings.

After holidays we get back to our day to day lives, it's very easy for us live with a narrow focus. It's easy for our world to shrink down to Bury St Edmunds and the concerns of daily living. Like anemones in rock pools, it's easy for us to close in and shut out the world out there, to feel we need to protect ourselves. Instead of living open, undefended with our tentacles spread out, receiving what comes our way. Today, harvest is a day to remember the bigger picture. Today is a day to remember the amazing, endless generosity of God in the world around us.

Today, three of us are being admitted into Communion. Communion is about God's generosity - God giving to us without limit and without end. And Communion is about how we respond to God's generosity. We can respond with thanksgiving, with love, with acceptance and trust.

When we take the bread and wine to the altar we use some special words. They are in our Order of Service. These words express our response to God's generosity.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:
through your goodness we have ourselves to offer,
fruit of the womb and work of human love.
We will become for you a holy people.
Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed be God for ever is our song today as we give thanks for the endless
abundance and generosity in creation.

*Canon Matthew Vernon
Canon Pastor & Sub Dean*