

Trinity Sunday (c)

The teacher was talking to her junior class about God and how hard it was to know about God. 'Where is God' the teacher asked. 'I know where God is' called out one little boy, he's in our bathroom. 'In the bathroom' the teacher replied. 'Yes every morning my Dad stomps up the stairs, raps on the bathroom door and yells, 'My God are you still in there'.

Yes God is in the bathroom because he's everywhere. Our happiness as human beings lies in acknowledging His existence and living by His commandments.

The OT tells us that at the foot of Mount Sinai the Israelites fashioned a golden calf, called it God and then worshipped it. This happened as Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments from the true God at the top of the mountain. Now, the first of these commandments is: 'I am the Lord your God, you shall not have strange gods before me'. So, in obedience to the Lord, the golden calf was smashed to smithereens.

Are there any Golden calves in our society which we need to smash? Life and death issues come to mind. At Auschwitz when the overpacked train-load of people arrived it was decided who would live or die. It's not uncommon these days for a doctor to ask an expectant mother if she wants to keep her baby. That's 'playing God' and unworthy of someone whose taken the Hippocratic Oath? The next thing they'll be asking poorly elderly people if they would like to die'. We have ways and means of putting you to sleep. Another example of playing God.

Often people put the blame on God or religion for all wars and regional conflicts in our world. However, the breaking of God's First commandment is what causes wars, not God. Even natural disasters are often triggered by humans. Soil erosion, for instance, caused by deforestation often results in fatal landslides. The first commandment requires us to be stewards of God's creation not exploiters.

But there are caricatures of God in circulation as well. One such is what I heard called the 'cuddly bear God'. This is a sugar-coated God who is falling over Himself to smooth out all the ruffles of our lives. This parody of God keeps us shielded from every pain. And yet, how many people have found the true God only in the pain? How many people have turned from false Gods only in the midst of a struggle? Jesus asks us to take up our crosses every day and follow him, not use religion as an

escape hatch from life's problems. Jesus never wanted to be cast in the mould of a 'superman', a quick fixer of everything which goes wrong. He won't send rain from a blue sky not matter how much we pray. In today's second reading we'll only share the glory of Christ if we've already carried His cross and shared in his sufferings. So I think the 'cuddly bear God' is for room 101.

The Book of Genesis says that God made man in 'his own image and likeness'. Some aim to refashion God into their own image. We don't play God, or sanitise the demands of the gospel for our own advantage. Best to let God be God and us to recognise our creaturely dependence on Him.