

Trinity Sunday (ABC)

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 as he taught.

The Bible tells us that at the foot of Mount Sinai the Israelites fashioned a golden calf, called it God and then worshipped it while 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, Moses smashed the Golden Calf to smithereens.

Are there any Golden calves in our society which we need to smash? Life and death issues come to mind. During the war when the over packed train-loads of ill-fated people arrived at Auschwitz it was decided who would live or die. It's not uncommon these days for medical personnel to ask mums-to-be if they want to keep their baby especially if it has a medical condition – even a small one. That's the hippocratic oath gone out the window.

Often people put the blame on God or religion for fuelling all wars. Isn't it the breaking of God's First commandment what causes wars, not God. Most wars are actually triggered by autocratic dictators who think they're God. They seem to be popping up everywhere these days. Even natural disasters are often caused by humans not the hand of the Creator. Soil erosion, for instance, caused by deforestation often results in fatal landslides. The first commandment demands we be stewards of God's creation not abusers.

But there are caricatures of God in circulation as well. One such is what I've heard called the 'cuddly bear God'. This is a sugar-coated God who is falling over Himself to smooth out all the ruffles of life. This parody of God keeps us shielded from every pain. And yet, how many people have found the true God only in their pain? How many people have turned from false Gods only in the midst of a crisis? Jesus asks us to

take up our crosses every day and follow him, not use religion as an escape hatch from facing life's problems. In the much-loved musical 'the Sound of Music' the nun in charge told the aspirant nun Julie Andrews that the convent wasn't for people who want to run away from life. Karl Marx saw the religion of his day as 'the opium of the people'. Jesus never wanted to be cast in the mould of a 'superhero', a quick fixer of everything which goes wrong. St Paul says '*we'll only share the glory of Christ if we've already shared in his sufferings*'. Sounds like the 'cuddly bear God needs to be given his P45.

So, I think it's best to let God be God and us humans to recognise our creaturely dependence on Him by acknowledging his existence and living as he taught.