



# Allocutio



Presentata Curia 28<sup>th</sup> April 2016

Allocutio: Love one another as I have loved you.

I was just listening to that second reading we had at Mass last weekend. “I John saw a new heaven and a new earth!”

He goes on to describe the new Jerusalem descending to meet the earth with the result that God himself is living right among us. The old world is gone, the world of disharmony and people fighting and disease killing. We are told there will be no more death, no more mourning, no more sadness. Everything is remade and given a new form. What a joy to think something decent lies ahead rather than this world of so much sadness and tragedy. May God help us get there.

But often in life and in scripture there is a rendez-vous, a treffpunkt, where you must go to make the contact. Remember ET and the mountain? It is a biblical theme by the way. Jesus too after he rose says the disciples must go to Galilee, they will see him there. Likewise later he tells them to go back to Jerusalem because there they will be given power from on high. But there is always a journey and a struggle and an input from our side to meet God on the Mountain, to connect with the God coming to meet us.

And in the Gospel last Sunday he was giving a clear direction to us about how we will meet this new Jerusalem coming down from heaven. “Love one another just as I have loved you”. To love one another as he has loved us is the way to the meeting point with the new heaven.

It is easy to look around the world and see the wars, the enmities, the broken relationships, all that is not well. People are not in fact loving one another at all. A lot of selfishness and hedonism reigns. Or else hate and violence. Many are quite happy to let others make the sacrifices. We have to be alert to a deep selfishness that can lurk in our hearts which we have to battle with always. But as we can see as long as selfishness or hating others is on the block there is no hope of seeing that new heaven, the new Jerusalem. But where you have real love, heaven will be there.

Strange. We know that if there was true love in the world, many of our problems would vanish. But we all contribute to a world that is not as good as it could be due to our lack of love. A baby is born into the world and by love and welcome and encouragement it will grow in confidence and flourish and be a person who makes a good contribution. But if some pain hits it, especially by being put down, it will slow down or go into a shell and not produce its potential. Sin slows down the human race and blocks advancement. And sometimes that blocking comes before the child is even born. Let us decide that for the



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good of the whole human race I will try to rise above selfishness and learn to truly love others, to welcome them, respect them, appreciate them, try and encourage them.

“Love one another as I have loved you!” How did Jesus love us? He loved us first by accepting us as we are. He knew we were not perfect but he didn’t abandon us or shrink from being in our company. The first step of love is an acceptance of another person just as they are. It does not help for example if a young person idealises or idolises their intended partner for life. The Pope in his recent letter on love in family says, “Neither spouse can expect the other to be perfect. Each must set aside all illusions and accept the other as he or she actually is# an unfinished product, needing to grow, a work in progress.” That is the truth of us all.

Sometimes too love calls us to accept a situation that is not obviously good. I think of Mary standing on Calvary where heaven seems miles away. A few moments ago I mentioned that theme we sometimes hear: where love is there is God and there too must be heaven. To the senses there was no heaven as the earth darkened that day and cold hit the place as Jesus gave his life in love and Mary offered up her sacrifice. But heaven was revealed in the Resurrection.

Of course what that means is that we all have to be humble about ourselves and accept our own shortcomings and the shortcomings of those round us. And we must accept our world of limitations in its many facets. As the Pope says in the final Chapter of that letter we want heaven in this world but in fact it is not here yet. We have to work towards it. We are journeying towards it and it will only arrive through our loving. And just as Christ put up with us, our wrong judgement of him, our false expectations of him, our rejection and betrayal of him, and just as he encouraged us despite all that and never gave up on us but kept lifting us up, we have to do that for others.

And Christ’s own example of forgiveness challenges us all to let go the shortcomings of one another. And Mary’s forbearance of her suffering inspires us too. Let us look at Christ’s loving and aim to become like him.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill