

A Homily in memory of Fr. Clifford Taylor

given by the sub-deacon of St. Barnabas of the Traditional Anglican Mission, Isle of Wight - Andrew Fellow - at evensong on Thursday 11th June 2009, The Feast Day of Corpus Christi and St. Barnabas, the Apostle.

“As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13, v 2.). and Jesus Christ said : “ I AM the living bread . . . which I will give for the life of the world” (St. John 6.)

The collect for the feast of Corpus Christi pleads to God that 'in this wonderful Sacrament' He has 'left us a memorial of His passion' (that) we -His children - 'may so venerate the sacred mysteries of his Body and (his) Blood, that we may perceive within us the fruit of (His) redemption'.

On this day, then, we are called to *apply* those fruits of our redemption. The action of the Holy Ghost, that empowering force recorded in the Scriptures in Acts Chapter 2 and the Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament meet where the Holy Scripture declare *we* are sanctified in Christ.

Therefore just as the Holy Ghost is the spirit of life to the believer, so our Lord is the Bread of Life. “I Am the living Bread”, our Lord Jesus Christ said, “which I will give for the life of the world.” In the Mass we are exhorted to “feed on Him in our hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.”

The altar of our Lord is an extension to Calvary itself. In the sacrifice of the Mass, these 'Holy Mysteries', on account of the double action (Bread changed into the Body of Christ; the Blood epitomised by the wine), we are entitled to speak of our Lord's Presence..... the whole Christ - since He can die no more - is *There* contained, whole and entire.

William Bright (1824-1901) wrote :-

Once only once, and once for all
His precious life he gave ;
Before the Cross in faith we fall,
And own it strong to save.

For as the priest of Aaron's line
Within the holiest stood.
And sprinkled all the mercy-shrine
With sacrificial blood ;

So, he who once atonement wrought,
Our priest of endless power,
Presents Himself for those he bought
In that dark noontide hour.

The hymn, often sung at Holy Communion, concludes by referring to the Presence we can all experience when making our Communion :-

And so we show Thy death, O Lord,
Till Thou again appear,
And feel, when we approach Thy board,
We have an altar here.

The whole Christ is there contained, whole and entire.

On June 4th the church celebrated the Feast of St Francis Caracciolo, confessor of the Faith. St. Francis was his 'professed' name because of his devotion to St. Francis of Assist. When in the Presence of the Tabernacle “St Francis' heart melted like wax, for there he felt the overflowing sweetness prepared by God for those who fear Him.” He possessed a great zeal for PRAYER : and PRAYER, linked both St. Francis Caracciolo and St. Barnabas together.

We read that the soul of St. Barnabas, the apostle, was inflamed with the Holy Ghost. It was through fasting and prayer that Saul (afterwards Paul) and Barnabas were sent on their apostolic mission (The Acts Ch. 8, v.3) "As they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.'" The secret of the call of these two servants of Christ was surely in that both were filled with Christ's Holy and Life-giving spirit - as was our Lord Jesus Himself as He came out of the river Jordan. So John the Baptist had been promised a mission even from his mother's womb. To Peter the Apostle the Holy Ghost enabled him to speak before the Council. For *all* those early believers, PRAYER was the secret and, to the first Christian martyr, Stephen, there came that beatific vision when - before he was stoned - he saw the heaven opened.

Barnabas had three significant virtues. He was firstly a good man, secondly he was spirit filled and, thirdly, he exercised faith which the writer to the Hebrews (Ch. 11, v. 1) describes :- "FAITH is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

As we celebrate that memorial of Christ's passion, that wonderful Sacrament Corpus Christi, and as we ponder the call of St. Barnabas, our patron, may we be conscious of our Mission to the world, for He has called us - in the Light of the Easter Message - to go on in His strength alone.

