

Sunday Message from Fr William for Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2024

*The 'Other World' continued from 21.07.24*

Dear People of St Mary's, I began these reflections on the 'other world' with you in my Sunday message to the parish for 2 July 2023, a little over a year ago. We've scratched the surface. I wish we had more time. I began by asking what is probably the most important question: Who is going to be there? Answer: First and foremost, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Our personal relationship with each, as we saw, begins now in this world, three astonishingly different personal relationships that each begin now and carry over into the 'other world'.

We looked at how our life in the 'other world' will be a life of freedom and love, potentially infinite freedom and love, a freedom and love that begin now, that have the capacity to grow throughout our lives in this world, and that carry over into the 'other world'. The more the Spirit is breathed into us, the more we become truly free, because the more we become most truly ourselves. And the more we grow in freedom the more we grow in our capacity for love, because love means above all giving ourselves from our personal freedom.

Our life in the 'other world' is not as disembodied spirits but as corporeal human beings, bodies as we are in this world with all our personal individuality, and yet recreated in the resurrection to become spiritual bodies, spiritualised in a new infusion of the Spirit. Our bodily senses, for example, undergo a new spiritualisation and remain for ever powers by which we experience the humanity of Christ and of each other. Our maleness and femaleness remain for ever a message of self-giving love, written into our bodies as a reflection of the Creator's own nature of self-giving love.

We haven't had time to go into the imperishability of our bodies in the 'other world'. We haven't had time to go into the three new powers by which we will know Father, Son and Spirit in the 'other world', nor into the ways in which the 'other world' is already breaking into this world. And with more time I would have wanted to share with you how much we can know about those wondrous beings of the 'other world' that tradition calls 'angels' and how they 'fit in' to the life of the 'other world'.

But what I hope has been clear in these reflections, and remains at the core of these reflections, is that the 'other world' is not a 'realm' where Father, Son and Spirit reside. The life of Father, Son and Spirit is the 'other world'. To be taken up into the 'other world' means for us to be taken up into their life, a life of infinite Freedom and Love – the Son eternally going forth from the Father, the Son eternally returning to the Father, twin dynamics eternally bridged over by the Spirit. And we are swept up into this dynamic life of infinite Freedom and Love by being joined to the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, as members of what tradition calls the Body of Christ.

From our own personal and finite freedom, we give ourselves to Him in self-giving love. What we then find in Him is a participation in his infinite Freedom and Love, his infinite coming from and going to the Father, and in addition a whole new world inside him of interpersonal relationships with each other.

 28 July 2024