

Where two or three meet in my name I shall be there with them. How poignant it seems to me to hear these words now when we have for so long been living under restrictions that have made it very difficult for two or three to meet. And yet in our small faith community on Anglesey we have done our best to keep those bonds of connection by gathering in virtual meetings like this, by small acts of kindness and 1:1 connection and we can be sure that even here in this zoom digital space of gathering Christ is truly with us. It is hard to underestimate the impact that this period of separation will have had on our faith communities.

Simply because our faith is at its heart all about the centrality of relationship. In that respect, our faith mirrors the physical reality of the cosmos.

Some of you here today took part in the Astonishing Secret talks where Daniel O'Leary spoke of the idea of creation as the first Bible, the first expression of the Word of God, the first incarnation if you like.

From the moment of creation in the big bang everything in the universe is relational, from the tiniest sub atomic particle to the largest masses of Stars and galaxies everything exists in relation to another thing, nothing exists on its own and in isolation, the essence of creation is relationship, the ground beneath your feet is in a relationship with you whether you like it or not!!! At the heart of this relationship is the energy of divine Love which flows through, for and with the whole of creation.

We believe in Trinity, One God, three persons united in an eternal relationship of love. The Incarnation, in the person of Jesus embodied God's loving relationship and as Christ lived out and proclaimed throughout the Gospel loving relationships is all that we are called to be a part of.

Just think of thateach of us is invited to be drawn deeper into this relationship of love that the whole of creation is built upon, and every particle vibrates with, and even in this very moment of gathering today we are an evolving unfolding expression of that love .

Our relationship with God is not a narrow exclusive one it calls us to look outwards and be active participants in loving relationship with all of humanity.

As we heard in the first reading and in the Gospel we have a responsibility to repair and rebuild broken relationships. We have a responsibility to come together as a community to listen, to harden not our hearts so that we may be able to resolve differences and conflict. It calls us to keep trying to repair and not give up on each other. Just think for a moment about Jesus's advice when the member of the community does not listen- treat them like a pagan and a tax collector, and how did Jesus treat pagans and tax collectors in the Gospel? He ignored the expected social norms and spent time with them, he invited a tax collector to become a trusted follower he did not exclude or give up on people.

I feel very fortunate to be part of the relationships that form the faith community on Anglesey, it has been a great help for me personally to be able to meet like we do today for these services and in other prayer and faith formation meetings. I believe that we have been and are very fortunate that we have sensitive pastors from the OMI community who have actively nurtured and encouraged lay involvement in the expression of our faith, and they continue to do that by their supportive presence here this evening. So I want to express gratitude to them but also to those who have helped us to make such gatherings possible, as a lot of thought and preparation goes into these gatherings, but also to you who gather here today and make community real by your presence as we gather as a whole Island, even in this virtual space . I know that for many of our community it has not been possible to join us this way or it has not been something they have felt comfortable to do. How can we reach out them?

Many of us hold a deep sense of loss at not having being able to gather as community to take part in Eucharist.

As you know our churches are slowly starting to reopen and more than ever we will need to be sensitive listeners to the needs of our community as we start to work through the new realities of returning to our church buildings to worship and celebrate Eucharist together again. Some may not return to church and for those of us who do, it will feel different and each of us has a responsibility to listen and to reach out to those who will be fearful or perhaps have felt forgotten and left out. There will be challenges for us all in the coming weeks and perhaps we can turn to the words of St Paul in the second reading for guidance: Love is the one thing that cannot hurt another, it is the one commandment that sums up all the other commandments, loving our neighbour is our only obligation.

In the coming weeks and months we will all need to hold this commandment close to our hearts in order to adapt to the changes the spirit is inviting us to embrace.

There is one other relationship that the spirit and the church is inviting us to attend to just now, that is our relationship to creation, to our mother the Earth. This month we begin the Season of Creation a sacred time of prayer focused on the gifts of nature. This year we are encouraged to mark the 5th anniversary of the publication of Pope Francis document "Laudate Si" with a renewed commitment to care for our environment and tackle social injustices.

I encourage you to go on our website and look at the resources that have been put together there to help us to be drawn into a more loving and nurturing relationship with our environment and to renew or make a new commitment to improve your relationship with creation.

If you were to spend a moment sometime this week, to become still and truly listen to the cry of the earth, what would she be asking you to do?