

HUMILITY – PURE AND SIMPLE

A Sermon for Sunday, Nov 11, 2018

St. Paul's Cathedral, Kamloops BC

The Very Rev. Ken Gray

1 AT FIRST GLANCE - THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MARK

As Jesus taught, he said, **“Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”** He sat down **opposite the treasury**, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For **all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.**” MARK 12:38-44

2 ANOTHER PLACE, ANOTHER TIME

I first met Jim Cruikshank at an ecumenical gathering while ministering in Sidney on Vancouver Island in I think 1986. Still dean of Christ Church Vancouver he and others were still hopeful about a deepening and tangible Anglican Roman Catholic relationship. Those were the day. He turned our attention to what we now know as the simple creed in Eucharistic Prayer 1: *Christ has died; Christ is Risen; Christ will come again.* For Jim, this was the core for Christian churches of our shared understanding about God and Christ. Everything else was either peripheral or errant.

He then launched into a reflection on humility, a modest or low view of our own importance, *humilius*, “low—to the ground” (i.e. posthumous)

I can only imagine what Jim would have shared with us had he been able to join us today. In all our relations, and I use the phrase intentionally, humility figures. Recall with me Philippians 2 (and here I honour the late Eugene Peterson who penned a fine paraphrase of the bible, *The Message* from which I quote here)

In your relationships with one another,
have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Jim Cruikshank and Eugene Peterson are right to cite humility and relationship together. And they come together well in the person of the late Bill Crockett, as it turns out a distant relative who would greet me at the Sorrento Centre with the words: “Hello cousin.” I quote from a recent Anglican Journal post:

3 RELATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP

The Rev. Bill Crockett, who died October 29 at age 84, was a brilliant but humble theologian whose importance shaping liturgy

and thought in the church runs deeper than is often realized, say some Anglicans who knew him.

“He has been an influence and an inspiration to many, and perhaps they don’t even know it,” said the Rev. Barbara Liotscos

Dean Elliott describes Bill as one “cloaked by a remarkable modesty . . . I don’t know anybody else who was able to express complex theological matters so succinctly and effectively,” he said. “He was one of the superstars of the Canadian church...but a very self-effacing guy, quiet, with a real sense of humour, and a really devoted family man.”

Liotscos said Crockett’s obituary, published in the Vancouver Sun and Province, suited his whimsical spirit in closing with the words, “In lieu of flowers, please take a friend out for dessert.”

In a profile in VST’s magazine, Perspectives, published on his retirement in 1999, Crockett said he felt the gap between conservatives and liberals posed a challenge to the church. “The strength of conservatism is that it holds fast to the gospel. The problem is it freezes the tradition,” he said. “Liberalism, on the other hand, is responsive to culture, but can become captive to it. We must prepare people theologically to deal with this diversity within the church.”

4 TRY A LITTLE HUMILITY
May we all find opportunity and discipline to take ourselves down a notch or to, not simply because it is a good and wise thing to do, but because Christ show it as the only way forward in the pursuit of a devout, religious and holy life.

