

"Do not let the sun go down on your anger"



Heather Cooke *reflects on* Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2 and John 6:35. 41-51

Do you ever get angry? We all do. It's only human. So it's affirming to read those two words near the beginning of today's letter to the Ephesians: "Be angry..." But it doesn't end there. "Be angry but do not sin." The difference is explained in the wise advice not to let the sun go down on our anger. Don't let it last too long, don't let it fester. Put it away from us, later verses advise, and build loving relationships. Sometimes, of course, we're right to get angry – if we can turn that anger into healing action. Even Jesus did, in righteous anger cleansing the Temple of greedy money-lenders.

People seem angry with Jesus in today's Gospel. How could he "have come down from heaven", they grumble, when they know he is a human being, with a father and mother like everyone else? What they don't yet appreciate is that his dual lineage, human and heavenly, is not only possible but crucial – in the strictest sense of the word.

The miracle of the cross, giving life to the world, reconciling heaven and earth, could only work because Jesus was both human and divine, son of Joseph but also Son of God. His humanity manifested itself in many ways – weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, using humour in his teaching, and even getting angry. It's only human. Fortunately for us, Jesus wasn't "only" human. ☺

Loving God, you came down from heaven in Jesus, that he might lead us home. In our journey, may we see him in all of humanity, share his anger at injustice and follow his example of service and sacrifice. Amen.

People of the New Testament Introduction, part 1

by Caroline Fletcher

Caroline Fletcher's new book, People of the New Testament, was inspired by articles she wrote for Sunday Link. In the coming weeks she will explain what motivated her to turn the articles into chapters, and tells us about some of the characters she has included.

Characters such as Barnabas and John Mark do not leap out of the pages of the Bible on first reading, as Paul or Peter do. Because they

are mentioned only briefly, I initially thought they would be perfect subjects for 150-word articles. It soon became clear, however, that there was so much more that could be said. As I have delved deeper into these characters and unearthed their stories, I've discovered that each of them reveals something unique about that period of time when Jesus walked the earth and the first churches were established. I hope you find them as fascinating, inspiring and faith-affirming as I have. ☺

“To confess our sins is to accuse ourselves of them: quite a different thing from merely telling them.”

Maud D. Petre (1863-1942), Roman Catholic laywoman

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

We are great recyclers and composters here on the smallholding but there's always stuff accumulating that we have to take to the local recycling centre. It's one of my favourite places where nothing is wasted, all is sorted and much of it will be reused in a new form. When I go there I feel burdened with all

the junk in the back of the car – the old, broken stuff and the things you can't just chuck away. When I leave there I feel lighter, cleaner, with new resolve not to allow such stuff to accumulate.

It feels like a confession of the mess in my life and in the world and coming away is just like being absolved. For me the link is obvious – God takes our mess and we leave free of the burden, transformed and with a new chance. ☺