

The words of our reading from the Book of Wisdom (3:1-9) are ones that speak powerfully against the view of death which the world around us seems to hold.

A view that holds death in great fear. A view that dares not often even speak of it. As those who hold the Christian faith and a Christian faith which David so beautifully showed forth in his life and in his work this is not our way and the Book of Wisdom speaks so very prophetically of the view of our relationship with death that would be made more clear through Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

As it says, "in the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery". One of the things that the tradition of the Church that David worked so hard to promote calls most dear is the promise that the things of earth and the things of heaven are much closer together than we can otherwise dare to believe.

Through the waters of baptism we are born into a new life. It is the beginning of a life in Christ which continues into the heavenly realm. At the altar we are fed with the bread of heaven and when someone reaches the end of their earthly life we continue to pray for them, to commend them to the love of God just as we would pray for them if they were our brother or sister in need sitting beside us in our church or in our home.

It is a very powerful witness that the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England and the wider Holy Catholic Church promotes and it is one that David, through his membership and service leading and being a member of the various societies: the Guild of All Souls; the Society of Mary; the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary; and his work with the Church Union and others as well, was keen to promote.

It is, if you like, an expression of the fullness of the promise that Jesus made to his disciples that where He is going they are to join Him and that not only is that something that will be fulfilled in the future but they are to follow on that journey with Him that He will indeed show them the way so that they may tread that same path to be, to enter into, God's Presence.

When we see that expressed is in a life lived in the Christian Faith and it doesn't just extend, of course, to what we pray in our church to what we express in our devotions but, and I know that David did not wish to be eulogised too fervently at his funeral, but I think it should be said that in his professional life and in his work promoting the causes of charities and in particular working to ensure that those who needed to be housed and sheltered were, indeed, housed and sheltered. That was part of his living out of a life in which the values of heaven and the

closeness of his God to him were made manifest to those with whom he lived and those whom he served.

And so as we gather here to pray for David, we pray for him not as one who is far off but one who is still close to us, joined together with us forever in the Communion of Saints. We pray for him as he reaches his rest. We pray that God may receive his soul and looking kindly upon the service that he gave and equipped with all of the graces that he received here on earth he will enjoy the vision of that glory and splendour of which those things were but a token and a sign even though ones that through their reality already begun to connect him with the heaven that he hoped to head towards.

It was my great privilege to meet David - only once – I wished I had the opportunity to meet him more but it was a privilege that one time I was to meet him was to give him for the last time here on earth that sacrament which had so sustained him throughout his Christian life even though, at that time, David was at his frailest nearing his final hours and so was able to utter little in the way of words the expression on his face as he received those final sacraments was such that you could tell that he recognised then the Presence of his Lord. His Lord whom he had come to know so closely in his many years of devotion and so it is with confidence that we can pray today in hope that that Lord whom he served here on earth he will be able to rejoice to serve in the glory of heaven not under signs or hidden underneath the veil of a sacrament but in the vision of His Glory.

In this Advent Season, as we approach very closely the celebration of the Incarnation of Our Lord we are reminded every time we celebrate Christmas that that is the beginning of a story that leads to the Cross. Through Jesus' Incarnation He took on our human nature and so already in that birth showed that he was prepared to die and to give his life for us. That precious gift we now celebrate as we offer his body and blood at this altar here where David worshipped in these later years.

We pray that our sacrifice here will be united with the sacrifice of heaven and that David may already enjoy the sharing of the worship of earth and heaven which is united in these holy places. May he with all the faithful departed enjoy the vision of that glory which we too hope to share and may we giving thanks for David's life his service and his example give thanks to God for the gift of all that David meant to each one of us gathered here today so that inspired by his example and equipped and refreshed with those gifts of love and grace received here today and remembered through David's life we too may proceed along that pilgrimage to our heavenly destination. Amen.

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