

‘Let all the world in every corner sing’ – A homily for Christ the King

I can't believe that Fr Angus is leaving us today, I'm actually feeling quite sad about it. Simon Oliver, who came all the way from Durham to preach at his first mass said that 'Angus will bring the gift of the priest theologian to the church,' and that is exactly what he has done for us here at All Saints.

I remember Fr Angus teaching some very young children about the Trinity for baptism preparation, as he took them round the church, looking at its carvings and images, its symbols and its etchings. He showed them a small symbol of the Trinity that I hadn't noticed before that reads: 'The Father is God, but the Father is not the Son and is not the Holy Spirit / The Son is God, but the Son is not Father and is not the Holy Spirit / The Holy Spirit is God, but the Holy Spirit is not the Son and is not the Father.' At that moment the scales fell from my eyes and the whole tremendous mystery of God revealed itself to me in total simplicity.

Fr Angus has a knack for just that sort of thing, for taking the deep things of God and presenting them in such a way that they hit us square in the face as self-evidently and beautifully true.

But Fr Angus also embodies something about Anglican faith as the way of integration. What do I mean by that? Well in every sermon that he preaches he reminds us that Christianity isn't about being mildly amused for an hour on a Sunday, but is rather about the shaping of a life. He has reminded us that God is the context in which everything somehow comes together, not just the easy and the comfortable things of life, but its apparent tensions, conflicts and complexities, somehow held together by an eternal and generous Wisdom.

We've heard Fr Angus speak a great deal about the church – and here he's meaning the church as a community rather than a building – as a 'workshop for the soul.' This beautiful Benedictine image tells us much. Here we are given the tools for 'soul-making,'

the tools for making something meaningful out of our lives as together they are shaped by wisdom, compassion and justice.

It has been so amazing to have Fr Angus with us here at All Saints as we attempt to draw something of this vision of integration together in a fragmented and broken world and in our fragmented and broken lives.

Look at our Church building: Today more than ever it speaks about Christian faith as addressing the whole person.

We can see our One Bread Cafe with its tables laid-out for hospitality and feasting, a vibrant sign of our human need to sit and eat together, to share life and its stories of laughter and sorrow, friendship and joy.

On our columns hang beautiful and challenging art work that invites us to look more deeply into our world, indeed to look with an artist's eye, discerning moments of revelation and catching glimpses of gift and grace.

And soon a dedicated area in the North Isle for Team Domenica, a charity dedicated to enabling people with learning difficulties to reach their full potential and feel included as members of society, learning and growing as part of our community, here in this place.

And at the centre an altar and a crucifix, drawing us into liturgy and worship of the God who makes himself known to us as Love.

And there it is: hospitality and welcome, art and imagination, justice and inclusion, prayer, worship and encounter.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King, in many ways the culmination of the Church's year. As Christ ascends into the heavens, there is not one place in the entire cosmos left dark or cold, all is now irradiated by his light and love, everything is made purposeful and beautiful by his presence, and all those disparate and knotty threads are woven together into one beautiful whole.

In such a vision as this, even as Fr Angus moves to another parish, continuing his journey and ministry by awakening new hearts to truth, goodness and beauty, we know

that his words and actions with us will only take on a deeper and richer meaning, as in Christ nothing is lost, nothing is forgotten, nothing is left behind.

Or as George Herbert puts it in our second hymn today, 'Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King!'