**Bishop Ellie, Mission and Kairos**

*Bishop Ellie’s translation from Wellington to Hull opens new vistas in mission*

**I was blown away** when I learned of the appointment of Bishop Ellie (the Rt Rev’d Dr Eleanor Sanderson) to be the next bishop of Hull. I’ve not been to Hull but 50 years ago I worked for a year with the Teesside Industrial Mission, to the North – a similar region with port, river,industry, city and charming rural areas.

 **Hull is in the East Riding of Yorkshire** and Bishop Ellie will be working with the Archbishop of York, John Cottrell, who led the Anglo-Catholic hui in Wellington a couple of years ago.

**In Greek there are two words for time:** one is **chronos**, as in chronological time. The other is **kairos**, and I believe Bishop Ellie’s appointment is a kairos– the right person in the right place at the right time – God’s time. She will have a pastoral and parish role but also a much wider role in the community and national church.

**Further south an Iranian woman**, Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani, is Bishop of Chelmsford and a member of the House of Lords. **Bishop Guli plays a lead role in Housing** both in the House of Lords as well as on the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Housing Commission. The plan is that every piece of church land in England will be evaluated for social housing. A similar project is under way in New Zealand.

**I have no doubt** that Bishop Ellie and Bishop Guli will have much in common.

**So there is a big picture**, but it is part of the even bigger picture painted for us by St Paul in his letter to the **Colossians** (1. 15-28). **Here is the ultimate picture** of:

* God in all Creation
* Jesus the first-born of creation
* Thrones, powers and rulers all hold together in him
* Christ,the head of the body, the Church
* All things and all people reconciled to Christ through his blood on the cross.

**Manifestly, this is not the case.** Evil and sin abound. The world, nations, races, and families are not reconciled. Culture clashes are widespread. Death, war, poverty, environmental degradation and the challenge of climate change surround us on all sides.

What we have in Colossians is our **missional challenge.** It is aspirational, a vision of what is possible in Christ, God’s ultimate purpose for the world, along with a calling to each of us in our Christian discipleship.

**And each one us,** once distant from God, has now become reconciled to God in Christ, and like Paul called to make known the word of God in all its fullness, the richness of this mystery in Christ in us, the hope of glory.

**Today’s Gospel** (Luke 10.38-42) brings all this down to earth with the well-known story of **Martha and Mary**:

* We synpathise with Martha, serving refreshments while Mary sits at Jesus’ feet
* (Did they perhaps swap halfway through and Mary washed the dishes while Martha sat at Jesus’ feet?!)
* Whatever, we can see in the story the importance of both **the inward and outward journey –** sitting at Jesus’ feet to deepen our relationship with God, and then lovingly going out to serve others.

**Here is a picture we are all part of:**

* St Peter’s – a worshipping community
* our open doors, outreach to the community, feeding the hungry, working on housing and other needs of Te Aro.

**The ministry of the laity** in the work-place, home and community stems from this same Pauline vision. But too often the church get things the wrong way round: the laity end up helping the clergy run the church instead of the clergy equipping the laity to be the spear-heads of God’s mission in the world.

**All of us in our daily life and work**, by every word, act of compassion, reconciliation, naming injustices, work to make Paul’s great vision in Colossians a reality in our world in our time.

**As we pray for +Ellie as Bishop of Hull,** and for ourselves in the mission we all share, I have the words of a hymn in mind:

*Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,
The wealth of land and sea,
The worlds of science and of art,
Revealed and ruled by Thee.*

*Then let us prove our heavenly birth
In all we do and know;
And claim the kingdom of the earth,
For Thee, and not Thy foe.*

*Work shall be prayer, if all be wrought
As Thou would have it done;
And prayer, by Thee inspired and taught,
Itself with work be one.*

AMR 13, Behold us, Lord, a little space…vv.4-6.

St Peter’s, Wellington, 17 July 2022

*Bishop Richard Randerson*