

REFLECTION – 18th May 2025

Psalm 148 & Revelation 21:1-6

As I reflected on the readings for today, I see the threads which link God's love for all of creation, its continuation, and renewed life. What also shines through is not only God's love for creation but just how important the necessity of our love for one another is. We hear it clearly in John, Psalm 148 and Revelation 21:1-6.

As a creative person something I can't help but notice is just how intricately woven together are the strands of divine affection, communal responsibility, and the hope of restoration. One exists within the other in the framework for understanding how the love of God permeates all of creation and how that love calls us to reflect it through our relationships with each other.

In Psalm 148 we hear a song of praise that invites all of creation to join in the exaltation of the Creator starting with the call to the heavens – the angels and celestial bodies- to praise God, declaring that their very existence is a testament to the greatness of God. The call doesn't stop there, it extends to the earth, that is, the mountains, hills, trees, and even the beast and creeping things all to join in this cosmic choir of worship. Image the music and melody! Each created part of the earth isn't here by accident – each has a purpose which is firmly grounded in the love of their Creator. Through the words of the psalm, we hear an emphasis that God's love for creation isn't a distant and far away love, its intrinsic and relational. Everything in existence has its being because God wants it to be that way. Knowing and acknowledging that great desire of God highlights for us that love

isn't passive it's the opposite. Love is an active force and part of the weave of the fabric of creation itself.

Absorbing and recognising God's love for nature and humanity, we enable ourselves to give a greater consideration of where we sit within this divine order. When we participate and fully engage in our worship of God, we are acknowledging our interconnectedness and responsibility toward one another and the world around us – we take off our blinkers which too often blind us to God's love of the world around us. Our expressions of love toward others are rooted in our understanding of how God loves us; we are called to mirror that divine love. Loving one another reflects our recognition of God's continuing activity, and sustenance of life, revealed to us through God's compassionate nature seen through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his empathy, and servanthood towards others.

Through John's Revelation we see a vision of new creation – a new heaven and a new earth, where the former things have passed away, where God unmistakably and purposefully is omnipresent that is present everywhere at the same time. Here John captures the pinnacle of God's love -God's ultimate desire to restore and the reconciled with God's creation.

The imagery of God wiping away every tear signifies not only an end to suffering but also the inception of an entirely renewed existence characterised by love, hope, and healing. Here, God's love expresses itself not just in creation but also in recreation – a powerful reminder that the divine relationship with humanity is one of restoration and redemption.

This other worldly vision propels us to see our current relationships in the light of what is to come. It invites all of us to ponder on how we are called to live out love in our communities today, embodying the love of God while anticipating God's ultimate fulfilment of creation. The idea that God will make all things new not only makes us hopeful but also offers us the motivation to become agents of love, mercy, and justice in a world that often feels very broken and too fractured.

Having the two threads of creation and renewal in our readings today coerce us to act as stewards of love. When we realise that God's creation is loved and cherished, we are reminded of the roles we play as protectors and nurturers of God's creation – both the environment and each other. Every act of kindness we extend, every moment we invest in the well-being of others, mirrors the divine love that God has shown us through God's creation and an equal unwavering intentional presence.

As witnesses we see God's love, as one of being holistic; meaning that it encompasses the entirety of creation. It is breaking into the present and promising us a future where love will ultimately triumph over pain and death. In the light of this divine hope, how we interact with one another has a very high priority. Here we have an invitation to live harmoniously with all of creation embracing and loving God's creation in full in the same way that God embraces us.

This gives a challenge! Our challenge lies in living out this divine love within our communities. Not just for our present but also for those who will follow us. It's very easy to love those who are like us or those who share our ideologies, those whom we feel comfortable to be around. However, Psalm 148 encourages us to extend our

understanding of love further by embracing diversity within humanity notwithstanding the various cultures, as we all acknowledge the beauty of God's intricate design in all its various forms. The call to praise and engage with creation in the psalm mirrors the relational aspects of Revelation 21, where all that has been broken is to experience the healing touch of God's renewing presence.

Looking back to our readings on God's love for creation and our love for one another we are enabled to take part in creation and its rhythms. We're encouraged to recognise just how much we're connected to it as we live out God's love through our relationships. This divine relationship compels us to act with intention, compassion, and justice, cultivating a community that mirrors the heavenly reality of the love of God. As we enter deeper into this understanding, we find that our purpose is to create spaces of love and grace, paving the way for the new creation that God has promised – a future where ultimately, all shall be made new.

Amen