

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen

From that gospel of Matthew which we have just read:

Jesus said "Follow me"

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"Follow me" the call of the disciple but to what – well, I will show you.

The mirror of faith. When we hold up the mirror of faith to our own lives then that mirror of faith allows us to see our own life in Jesus life.

But more than that, much more than that, when we hold up the mirror of faith we see Jesus life in ours.

Are you tempted, are you lonely, are you disappointed, are you frustrated, are your friends a disappointment. Jesus speaks and speaks very clearly, as you hold up the mirror of faith Jesus says

"Follow me"

That is what it is to see Jesus, when we begin to see our own story in Jesus story then we hold the mirror of faith to our own lives and we begin to understand how, where, when, to enter more deeply into God's life, and we begin: Living our Vision of love which helps us make sense of who and what we are because God is love. Love which helps us make sense of the world in which we live, of our experience of inequality, injustice, prejudice. That is what living the vision of God's love and building that Kingdom of Love in Argyll and The Isles is all about. We need to feel, experience God's love even if that feeling that experience is of absence, longing, intellectual doubt and emotional confusion.

That is what the great Shema of the book of Deuteronomy is all about – You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul.

Hold up the mirror of faith, indeed hold up the mirror every morning and repeat those words and see Our Lord Jesus Christ in the story of your day as it unfolds, hear Jesus words "Follow me", as you attempt Living our Vision of love which we feel and know in affection and warmth or its absence. And yet love, which speaks to us in peace, fulfilment, understanding and acceptance, that is what it is for the disciple to hear Jesus call, "follow me" and then in the glorious words of Philippians to enter the "same mind as was in Christ Jesus". But beware because the disciple who hears "Follow me" the disciple who finds the fact, the fact that Jesus Christ was born as we are to show God is with us, the mirror of faith allows us to see our story in His but beware because members of any congregation, may recognise their story in Jesus story, a member may hear Jesus "follow me" - and they may think – this could be good.

But the disciple, the disciple has the courage to turn the mirror of faith over to the magnifying side and the pimples and the wrinkles and the spots and the scars are all there magnified in the reflection, living our vision of God's love acceptance, understanding, fulfilment, we see in the mirror of faith the reflection of our lives and what by tradition, those spots and wrinkles, we would rather be without, what by tradition is known as sin, we see very clearly in the mirror of faith – we have to come to terms with those bits of ourselves we would rather be without.

Isn't that what Lent is all about for the disciple living the vision by holding up the mirror of faith and seeing the temptations, the wilderness experience, all deep, deep, deep within ourselves. Through which, by God's grace, the Holy Spirit allows us to see and to accept, living our vision – that the same mind is in me as was in Christ Jesus.

That glorious epistle read every Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, those days in which we see Jesus exalted and then tired, confident on entry into Jerusalem and doubt, doubt, doubt, questions, questions, questions in Gethsemane, living our vision. The mirror of faith, we look and we see, see so many of our doubts, questions. Remember Jesus said "Follow me" to Peter and Peter followed and he was going to conquer the world. Until his fear, his fear that looking in the mirror of faith it was not as he thought life with God should be and he denied Jesus. And Jesus turned and looked at him.

The disciple holds up the mirror of faith to their life in this season of lent and we are rarely impressed at what we see but when we hear "follow me" remember Peter who denied, Jesus really made something of him.

And yet, how did Peter feel when he heard from the women, the women remember, showed no fear on Calvary, the women laid him in the tomb. The tomb of absence, the absence of God is something we all face, the tomb of loneliness, depression, misunderstanding but hold up the mirror of faith and we see in all those things God is with us that is the importance of the tomb, that is how God made something of Peter. That is what living our vision is all about.

More people intuitively understand the mirror of faith than we realise. What they intuitively understand is, there are no easy answers. And in the dark and damp of the tomb, it requires too much commitment, thought, love – that is self-giving, what the psalmist called Holiness, the Holiness of integrity which comes in the light and life of the story of Jesus resurrection.

Resurrection which the disciple sees, knows, feels, even if only by its absence. Sees, knows, feels every day and in every way as you, hold up the mirror of faith, feel Jesus beside in the tomb, hear the words of Jesus life and death – God is with us – feel the peace, fulfilment, understanding, acceptance that is God's grace – God's love, in our lives, living our vision as disciples – Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets for us to share the good news.

