

***Te Tino Waerea Ataahua*¹**

The beautiful faith that clears the way..

Gen 32: 22-31, Paul 9:1-5, Matt 14:13-21 (Jesus Feeds the 5000)

My very first time here in this Cathedral was as a youth worker. I had brought a couple of van loads of young people from the East Coast and Gisborne to enjoy the excitement of the big city as part of the hahi rangatahi group we had brought together.

The preacher we had that day was the same one we had yesterday – Rev. Don Tamihere now Archbishop Don, Te Pihopa o Aotearoa – and he preached on the calling of Mary, mother of Jesus, and that she be the one to carry and nurture the saviour of the world, the son of God, the holy and human sacrificial lamb. And that she as an unmarried, unknown and unlikely candidate for the role was visited by the Angel Gabriel and was told that she would be filled with the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High would come upon her.

And the challenge from the preacher that day was not to consider how we might respond to being placed in Mary's position but how God comes in to the unknown and calls people there that they may overcome their discomforts and shortfalls, not only by prayer and contemplation but, as Mary was told, by being filled with the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High.

And it was from there that my journey began to discover what exactly God means when we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit and what exactly does it mean to have the power of the Most High come upon you? And I'm sure there is varying theology in this room about what that is, and academics and clergy might debate from dusk till dawn; however, I returned to my valley in Tikitiki and Rangitukia and continued that search. And what I discovered is that there is a simplicity and sensibility to the Holy Spirit which I have also sensed here. And it wasn't the same time or environment that the great Kaiwhakaako Piripi Taumata a Kura and his contemporay William Williams encountered, or even the same time or environment that the post world war generations encountered where wharekaraki sprung up next to many Marae and bends of Te Tairāwhiti birthing a generation of Minita a Iwi. But in my time of the early 2000's the spirit that filled those generations was still there.

He tino waerea ataahua...the beautiful faith that clears the way

And where I felt the Holy Spirit alive is in the beauty and care of our Marae in Tikitiki and Rangitukia.

The Marae is the principal home of Māori; Māori who are not connected or are not engaged with their Marae are missing out on an important part of their identity. It is where you are taught to serve, the whakapapa history of your ancestors, protocols of being a whanau member of a shared community. Often rules are experiential, caught not taught, such as: you begin at the back before you can move to the front; before you perform the karanga, whaikorero and make the major decisions you dry the dishes, peel the potatoes, pick the vegetables, clear the tables. I have been here for three weeks and I have sensed that same spirit of care for this beautiful wharekarakia, the various volunteers coming to serve, lend a hand, bring food, embued by a common thread something spoken of by our preacher yesterday *te tino waerea ataahua...the beautiful faith that clears the way.*

¹ *Te tino waere ataahua* is a phrase used by our tipuna minita in the Waiapu Valley to refer to the Mihinare faith as the beautiful faith that clears the way.

I felt the Holy Spirit alive in Tikitiki and Rangitukia where there is creativity and spontaneity.

In the beauty of the hills, the rivers, the sunrises, singing, laughter and oratory, giving inspiration for the arts – carving, dancing, story-telling. Similarly I have felt that here in the choir, the flower arranging and in the pausing for regular cups of tea, but I especially felt it at my installation and the fellowship at the Marae yesterday, *te tino waerea ataahua the beautiful faith that clears the way for creativity and spontaneity*.

And I felt the Holy Spirit alive where there is sacrifice and this is the thing I've felt strongly here, that mirrors my Marae in Tikitiki and Rangitukia. While sacrifice is admirable and, many of us believe, necessary for the legacy of our Marae and our Church to remain there is a mode that comes with that – and that is 'survival mode' which can drain creativity, spontaneity and care, as our gospel (John 10:10) yesterday said, the thief comes to lie, steal and destroy but Jesus came to bring life and life in abundance.

And so how do we become a place where we are filled with the Holy Spirit that the power of the Most High may come upon us? How do we overcome an enemy that wishes to lie, steal and destroy, and become a place that brings life and life abundant a place of Te Oranga Ake a life of flourishing for all. The foundations for flourishing are here among this whanau and that *is our beautiful faith that clears the way...te tino waerea ataahua*.

Lastly I want to say thank you and give thanks for everyone who made my installation a reality. Only God knew from a young woman sitting in these pews that I would be standing here today. From a cup of tea between two friends, the relationship and dreaming of two brother bishops, to the discernment and wisdom of a vestry nominations committee to the quiet agreement of a reluctant mother and a wildly unaware but supportive whanau; yesterday came to life abundantly.

And while the seeds had been planted a few months ago, yesterday came together by your efforts in 3-4 weeks. The efforts of the Cathedral parish, Cathedral staff, Choir, Waiapu Diocesan team, Te Pihopatanga team, Installation team, Ngā Kura Mihinare, Te Aute and Hukarere, Kohupatiki, Matau a Maui, Taikitimu tēna, ngā mihi rawa atu. And if we can achieve what we did yesterday in 3-4 weeks imagine what we can achieve in 3-4 months and in a year.

In our gospel today with two fish and five loaves of bread Jesus feeds 5000 and, after all have eaten, there are 12 baskets remaining and abundance. So go whanau and be filled by the Holy Spirit that the power of the Most High come upon us and like Jesus feed the thousands gathered from abundance that there is more than we every thought possible. And how? Na tino waerea ataahua, the beautiful faith that clears the way. The faith that overcomes the thing that tries to lie, steal and destroy but instead brings life and in abundance.

Ka waiho au ēnei kupu ki a koutou i runga i te Atua Matua, Tama, Wairua Tapu. Amine

I leave you with these words in the name of the God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Dean Ruihana