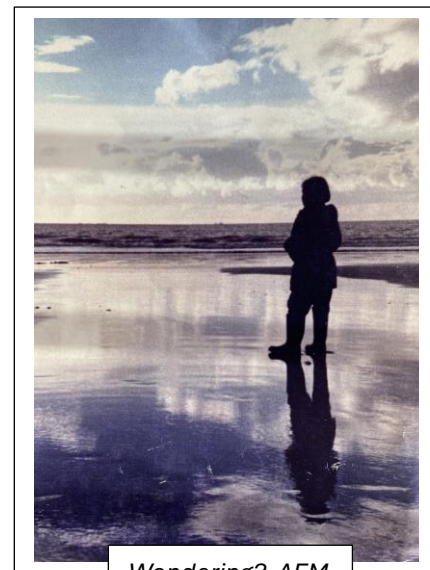


Perspectives of Paradox intro

Paradox is situation or statement that seems impossible or difficult to understand because it contains two opposite facts or characteristics. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Paradox is there in every aspect of our faith. It is there in the conception, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. God is both transcendent and with-us in every moment; beginning and end yet central in all things; all powerful yet vulnerable. Church liturgies seek to give creative expression to these mysteries.



Wondering? AEM

Northumbria Community has always explored and sought to articulate the paradoxical nature of faith. In their current prayer guide, Saturday prayers are devoted to paradox. With their permission, I shall draw on some of these* for a series of six reflections during Advent to Epiphany.

****‘As we live in a space that is both alone and together, some yearn for more togetherness and others long for more solitude. Knowing both are essential, we ask God to guide us as we seek to find the right balance in our own lives.’****

St Cuthbert, one of our northern saints, typifies this tension. As bishop he was called to travel, preach and engage with people, yet he also longed for solitude on his island to be alone with God. Yet even here is another paradox – for being alone with God, we are never alone. Being truly alone with nothing is a terrible place to be – hell, in fact. Being alone with God is to be alone with the Trinity and the communion of saints, living and departed, to which we ourselves belong.

‘Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him.’ Luke 6.12-13

Before Sunday worship, some like silence, others enjoy conversation. God is equally in both places. Sunday services invite us all together into one holy space to listen to God, to worship God and to share God’s peace with one another – both collectively and individually, in sound and in silence.

Our prayer might be for those experiencing the extremes of paradox: those who feel the emptiness of being alone - who cannot sense God-with-them: and those who are fearful of engaging with other people. May Christ be their touching place.

Nov 2024