



St Paul's Egham Hythe August 2nd 2020

A Refection: God's Overflowing Love

During August we are joined with the wider group from our community who are sharing in our 2020 version of Holiday at Home, receiving each week a pack of materials to explore our theme this year which is 'The Fruits of the Spirit', that list of the signs of the work of God's Spirit in each of us that St. Paul gives in his letter to those early Christians in the churches in Galatia:

'the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.' (Galatians 5, 22-23)

This week we begin, as St. Paul did, with **Love**. It is love received from God, accepted as our free gift, that is the starting point of being able to show those other fruits in our lives. In his letter to the Corinthians Paul calls love the greatest gift.

Our bible reading this week is Matthew's account of Jesus feeding the crowd of 5,000, (and that number he says was reached by just counting the men!) with a meagre five loaves and two small fishes. This miraculous event helps us understand, through the actions of Jesus the Son, something of God's love; the love that we are called to allow to work in us so that we can then reflect in the world around us.

We are told that Jesus, having just heard the news that king Herod has had John the Baptist beheaded, wanted to be alone, but the crowd had other ideas and followed him.

Jesus's response is compassionate and selfless. He first cures the sick and then when the disciples want to send away these crowds, who now find themselves out in the countryside with no food, he has them stay and miraculously feeds them all, from the seemingly very little that is those five loaves and two fish. He provides for so many, so generously, that once they are all satisfied there are twelve baskets of leftovers.

This Jesus does by blessing what he has; offering it to God and trusting in the generosity of God's overflowing, all-inclusive, love.

It may be possible to picture that scene, the great crowds of first amazed and then contented people all sat down on the ground as Jesus had ordered. Much harder maybe to accept that that unending, all embracing, love of God is for us too.

There is a game that we play with young people to help them know that God loves them; they are invited to open a box to see something inside that God loves. In the box is a mirror so that when asked what they have seen that God loves, the answer is themselves. This week whenever you look in a mirror to comb your hair, brush your teeth or check your clothing, take a moment to remember that God loves you, just as you are.

