

The Gloria through Lent. Week 1: Glory to God in the highest!

Glory to God in the highest

And peace to his people on Earth.

It was hardly a surprise this week to discover that Russian dissident Alexei Navalny was murdered by the State system that he challenged. A man who tried to affect change by peaceful means, killed by an act of wicked violence. He wasn't the first and probably won't be the last of whom that can be said.

The first phrase of The Gloria which we say together during Holy Communion services launches with the theme of peace, both present and promised. These words of praise echo the song of the Angels at the birth of our Saviour. They freely give praise to the God who is above all that we can see or know, using the image of height. This echoes the words in Isaiah chapter 55 verse 9:

“As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways;
and my thoughts than your thoughts (says the Lord)

In God's Heaven everlasting peace is the norm.

It's fullness is hidden from our eyes at the moment, but because of Christ we will one day stand with the Angels in perfect praise and glory! In the present we are called to prepare for that day. To get some practice in as it were. And when we say 'Peace to his people on Earth' we are repeating a heavenly greeting and invitation rolled into one. God wants us to know peace

and God desires that we work for peace to. There is no shortage of opportunities on Earth to secure lasting peace among peoples. No shortage of people willing to make sacrifices for the sake of a greater peace. They just need plenty of support to succeed.

Jesus spoke of peace as something 'the world cannot give'. Personal peace is something only the creator can give. The peace receivers are those who become the peace makers of whom Jesus declares 'blessed'

For personal pondering this week:

- Ask our God every day this week for that peace which only *He* can deliver. As you ask ponder what difference that might make to you.
- Is there anything I can support which works for peace and reconciliation?

And may the peace of God which passes all our understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

