

Retreat of the UWI Mona Anglican Community at Hillcrest Diocesan Retreat Centre

March 24 - 26, 2017

Theme : The Spirituality of Leadership

Conductor : Dr Minke Newman

Friday 24th

After supper we were led in Compline by Canon Garth followed by an introduction to the reflections for the retreat by Dr Newman.

The question she posited that would shape the reflections was “What does it mean to be a Christian and practice ‘Christian living’ in daily life such as in the work we do?”

She gave an overview of her own work being done with disadvantaged children of the Ambrook Lane Community and outlined that the reflection on Spirituality of leadership would consider :

- Who is called to lead(ership)
- The call
- The anointing
- The challenge
- The struggle

She would use persons in scripture to discuss the various facets of leadership as well as share her personal experiences.

Saturday 25th

Morning prayer was at 8am and after breakfast we had the first reflection .

Who is called to leadership?

All Christians are leaders as we are charged to lead others to Christ (the Great Commission – St Matt. 20:28) and are to be salt (for preservation) and light (for guidance). St Matt. 5:13-16

We are therefore called at various times in our lives through the Holy Spirit, to lead others by serving and to serve others by leading.

Dr Newman shared with us her own call to leadership in which she felt an urgent call to work with children and so she started working with the children of an inner city community close to her home church St. Andrew Parish Church. She shared the questioning that she faced as others saw her determination to do this work. Questions about age (her relative youthfulness), gender and social background and she confronted the issue of self-confidence.

Questions for personal reflection :

Who does God call to lead?

Does God call women to lead?

- 1) Judges 4:4 – Deborah was a judge and a prophet who led the people of Israel for a time;
- 2) Rom. 16:1 - Phoebe was a Deacon and was commended by Paul for her exemplary leadership.
- 3) St John 20:1 - Women were the first messengers of the Gospel as they first encountered the risen Lord and told others.

Does God call young people to leadership? - But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (1 Cor. 1 : 27)

- 1) Isaiah 11:6...and a little child shall lead them.
- 2) Jer. 1:4 -8 “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”... But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’”
- 3) 1 Sam. 3: 8-10 - Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”
- 4) 1 Sam 13 : 11 -12 - So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.” So he sent for him and had him brought in. .. Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.”

Some are called to specific leadership roles – teacher, priest; while some are called to lead large or small groups.

“Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13 :7).

The Call

People are called in various ways

Moses' call came after a devastating occurrence (Ex. 2: 11-15) and at first he was rejected by the persons he was called to lead (Acts 7: 23 – 36).

Dr Newman spoke of 'the divine bother' in her own situation as she felt called to work with children.

'The divine bother' is whatever one sees that stirs in her/him the need for things to change.

Questions for personal reflection :

Has God called you to be a Christian leader?

In what ways are you called to lead?

What is your 'divine bother'? i.e. what do you see that you think 'needs to change'?

Eucharist was celebrated at mid-day followed by lunch.

We resumed at 4pm with continuation of the address and reflection led by Dr Newman.

The anointing

This refers to the special indwelling of the Holy Spirit equipping us for our 'mission'.

In the OT anointing was also physical, as oil was used to mark leaders - 1Sam. 16:13, "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David." In the NT and in our own time it is spiritual i.e. inward anointing.

Acts 9 : 17 "Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Matt. 3: 16-17 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Anointing is followed by confirmation of the call. This may come from people around you – the body of believers.

Eli confirmed Samuel's call; Ananias and Barnabas confirmed Paul's call; God himself confirmed Jesus' call.

This is followed by inner affirmation i.e. a deeper desire and passion towards whatever we are called to do. "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died" (2 Cor. 5:14).

Sometimes giftedness confirms the call but sometimes God bestows a gift *after* the call e.g. it was after Moses was called that God put the words in his mouth.

Sometimes the sign is supernatural such as Moses' experience with the burning bush and Paul's with the bright light but sometimes it is a transformation of self whereby God equips us with characteristics to serve e.g. patience.

Dr Newman shared more of her personal call including a life changing experience at a youth conference and the work she has been doing with street and inner city children.

The day closed with Compline after supper.

Sunday 26th

The group attended Holy Eucharist at St. Mark's after which we had brunch.

The Challenge

Reflection continued on the characteristics of Christian leaders

- Humility – our concept of leadership is to be a servant – Matt. 20 :26... Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.
- Obedience – Jam. 3 : 1 Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.
- Discipline – 1 Tim 4 : 7 - Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.
- Love – Rom 12 :9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good
- Sincerity – 2 Cor. 8:8 - I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.
- Patience – Gal. 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
- Knowledgeable
- Gentle
- Wise
- Prepared

These are necessary because “We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5 : 20).

Leaders should be mindful of their responsibility to not compromise themselves or cause others to stumble - "Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." (Deut. 27 : 26)

Question for personal reflection :

How has God equipped you for Christian leadership?

The Struggle

Many leaders face times of struggle usually after the anointing.

1) Moses (Num. 11 : 11-15)

20 Elijah (1 Kings 19 : 3-4)

Dr Newman shared her own feeling of 'burn out' especially as she had less help than in the early days.

However at all times - Remember God's grace!

Num. 11 :16 The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you.

1 Kings 19 : 7-18 – Elijah was comforted, nourished and saw God.

David while he was always being pursued by Saul was sent a true friend who encouraged him.

1 Sam. 20 : 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

Remember we are all called to be leaders...to lead by serving and to serve by leading.

Prepared by : Tereza Richards

April 8, 2017