

*Awesome!*

What more can we say than that? *Awesome!* Put whatever inflection upon it you like, but that is what today is about! *Awesome* stuff!

One of the pleasures of showing people about this area is the simple breath-taking nature of what many of us, could, if we're not careful, take for granted. I know, having grown up in Tasmania on the north west coast, that the view that our family enjoyed is simply awesome, and being next to the sea, different every day. It is only now, having moved away and looking through the glass dimly that I can appreciate what my parents saw in the 1960s when they decided to pitch the tent where they did.

And here we are in the Macedon Ranges shire where we can lift up our eyes daily to the hills, and the question is asked "Where shall I find help?" The answer, as we know, from Psalm 121 is explicit: our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Like the changing moods of the sea, the range changes in its countenance, and each day, each colour, each sensation is different. Showing people around, we get a glimpse through their eyes as they simply affirm the beauty, and let out a sigh and say, "awesome"!

As part of my self-care, I took my good friend around the mountain late Thursday afternoon. This is where you will know that I am mad. We drove up into the mist. I loved it! The clouds were swirling around the summit, like large curtains of lace coming down to the ground and then being lifted up again. The Memorial Cross was but a silhouette in the fog, and the temperature was a balmy 5° according the gauge in the car. My friend commandeered my cashmere scarf and complained about the cold. I was content, as some of you have often noticed, some aghast, to walk in the cold in my sandals. *Awesome!*

I loved the mists through the trees. I loved the interplay of sounds coming out of the unknown. I could almost perceive what Isaiah must have felt as he peered into the throne of incense to perceive where God was on the throne as all sorts of critters flew about him. It was surreal as it was real. A deep breath in, albeit cooler than usual, certainly heightened the senses.

Just to make it even more surreal, we journeyed to Sanatorium Lake. The mists were at play there as well, as was a slight stirring over the water. The wind was blowing from somewhere: almost like what Jesus said to Nicodemus about the Spirit: you knew it was there, but you couldn't perceive where it was coming from. Looking at the scene of the lake in the mist, gloom and wind, it was like looking into a painting freshly done by the Heidelberg School of painting. I tried to get a photo of it to do justice...intellectually, the challenge was there. At this point, my friend took in a deep breath and said, *awesome!*

We met a young man there. I asked about the reflections. He said it wasn't a mirror today, but he regretted not bringing his camera. He said there was something special about it today. He then noticed my almost naked feet. "Are you trying to be one with nature?" he asked. I smiled. It was nice to have a question other than "are you not cold?"

It is in the simple act of conversation that many things can change. For Isaiah, in his vision of the throne room, the centre of all creation, he encounters the most awesome vision and sensation. It is simply breath-taking. His breath, the *pneuma*, is suspended in the sight of the majesty of God. It is there he realises that he is *unclean* or unworthy to be in the presence. He sees the grandeur of God, yet, he still lives. The seraphim cleanse him with a coal from

the throne of incense, and God asks the question about whom he shall send. *Here I am, Lord. Send me*, echoing the words of Samuel.

The psalm for today, Psalm 29, simply should be called *awesome*. It is litany of the greatness of God in the beauty of the created realm. In that litany, not everything that is listed is what we would see as being positive! The Lord is in the powerful acts, breaking the cedars of Lebanon with tempest; causing the land to quake as it skips like a calf; flashing forth flames of fire, shaking the wilderness, stirring the oaks, stripping forests bare, and enthroned above the flood. Yet in all of this, everyone in the presence of God cries out GLORY!

The message is clear: the LORD is above all of that. The lesson of Elijah on the mountain top is brought to mind. God is not in the tempest, but rather, it where we are to look in the midst of all that we face. It is then, once we see through the nature of the world that we realise that the LORD reigns forever, giving strength to all people. It is easy to lose sight of God in the turmoil around us, but sometimes, we need to look deeper to see what is truly happening to see the presence of God.

Through the promises of Christ Jesus, writes Paul, look past the ways of the flesh. Look to that which is spiritual and enriching. As children of God, we are inheritors, through Christ, of the awesome heavenly kingdom. This is very much at the heart of the nature of the most glorious Trinity. To access the divine, the words of Jesus in John 14 gain verisimilitude. The only way to the glory that is God is through Jesus Christ our Lord. But it requires of us to be *born again*, that is, to begin again.

For Isaiah, that beginning again was granted through the symbolic placing of a coal upon his lips. For us, it is to be born again of the third person of the Trinity: The Spirit. For Nicodemus, this did not make sense. He took this literally: am I to return to my mother's womb and start again? No, but rather, spiritually, in the presence of God for all times. It is of the Spirit that we are born again, not of the flesh. This also underpins what Paul writes to the Romans that we are not of flesh but of Spirit.

To look at how this works, the key to understanding the Trinity is actually in the Psalm. We are to look beyond the difficulties that we face and address the simple reality that the Lord is simply *awesome*! Too often we let ourselves get tangled in all the theologies of the times but fail to see that the Spirit blows, the *pneuma* where it wills, and God is not in our traumas. No, God is with us, and wants us to pitch our tents in the divine presence.

And in this interplay that we have with the Trinity God has given us a simple but *awesome* gift to show the way: his only Son, and in belief in him, we see the Father, and experience the breath of God, our true and only inspiration.

This interplay, a movement of understanding God at work, is like a not-so-complex manoeuvre, but rather, a simple dance of pleasure and joy.

So ,let's keep it simple: God so loved the World that we received the only Son, so that, whoever has faith in him will inherit eternal life. To have faith is to begin again. That, surely, is all we need to know. The rest of what happens, awesome as it maybe, is nothing compared to being in the presence of the Divine: the most holy and most glorious Holy Trinity, one God, now and for ever. Amen.