

## EASTER -7

The Collect for today is often used at Evening Prayer as a form of absolution. It is a beautiful prayer

Merciful Lord, grant to your faithful people pardon and peace:

that we may be cleansed from all our sins  
and serve you with a quiet mind;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

A quiet mind - what would we give for a quiet mind? A mind set free from all stress and anxiety - a mind set free from all fear and depression - a mind set free from all guilt and remorse. That indeed would be a blessing.

But what then? Why should God want us to have a quiet mind? Is it right to have a quiet mind in face of all the injustice we see around us in the world. How can we have a quiet mind when the world appears to be teetering on the brink of a war in which thousands of innocent people will be killed because of a fanatical dictator in the Gulf. How can we have a quiet mind when the peace talks in Ireland seem once again to be doomed? How can we have a quiet mind when the General Synod are once again debating which version of the Lord's prayer we ought to use when people are leaving the church in droves and churches are closing through lack of financial support?

The human mind is our distinguishing feature - distinguishing us from all other creatures on earth. It gives us the ability to reflect on ourselves in a way which - so I'm told - is not possible for other of God's creatures. Somewhere I have read that when a dog has a meal, it lies down and sleeps in peace; whereas when a human being has a meal, as soon as it is finished, he starts worrying about where the next one is coming from. Our minds don't rest much at all. So why has God given us such a restless mind? Why has God created this brain of ours which even the biggest computers in the world cannot imitate?

Jesus commanded us to love God with our minds. In his summary of the Law which we repeat at every Eucharist, Jesus added this phrase 'with all your mind'. By which he implied, "Don't simply obey the law of God like a human computer - but think - understand - interpret - wrestle with the complex issues of our time and come to a Christian understanding

St. Paul said "Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution". In other words, don't just go along with the majority view - the majority is usually misguided anyway - but see things - interpret things in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ who turned the world's values upside-down. Happiness is to be gained from giving - not in receiving - we find our true selves by being prepared to lose ourselves. These are not the world's values. St. Paul goes on to say in Ephesians "we are those who have the mind of Christ" this is not a passive mind or a quiet mind, but a mind which is concerned to be militant about the establishment of God's

kingdom of peace and justice throughout his world. As St. Francis wrote

"Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
Where there is injury, your pardon,  
And where there is doubt, true faith in you."

This kind of transformation in the way Jesus requires, doesn't come about by mindless obedience to religious rules and regulations but by the ceaseless struggle to bring about radical change in the world in which God has placed us.

Amen