

Something to think about: 20 June 2010

A conversation - remember those?

I am 'told' lots of stuff and I can accept or reject what I am told. Differences are debated with the expectation that there will be a winner whose opinion rules the day. And even when I am talking with others, it seems to be a 'parallel talk' with little interaction – more your turn/my turn. A good conversation is not a frequent experience. It seems we have lost the art – and I use that word 'art' advisedly. I think 'conversation' is a creative skill, that in the busyness of our contemporary lives we seem not to practice and not to teach our young. Having a conversation takes time. It requires an open relaxed state of mind, and it is best supported by an environment that is conducive to vulnerability and lack of defensiveness. I am challenged by remembering the 'good conversations' I have had recently, and wondering how I can plan to have more of them. A conversation that openly explores perspectives on an issue or topic, without the need to solve or persuade, is a rare gift. As I prepare for the Hermeneutics Hui the Anglican Church in NZ Church is holding shortly, focusing on issues of sexuality and on the world-wide Anglican Communion Covenant on the ordination of Gay and Lesbian people, I am challenged as to how I can use that gift. I am challenged as to how we will be able to engage in an artful conversation, and not a debate or a damaging exchange in order to instruct each other on the rightness of our perspectives. I am interested as to whether or not we will see our capacity to hold together as a human community with all our differences as important, and then accept that a willingness to continue conversations may be the best we have to gift to each other. In the meantime, the call will be to act in ways that reflect the inclusive and hospitable love of a compassionate God.

Susan