

To the Revolution!
The Rev Keith King
Sunday 21st August 2011

In last week's New Zealand Herald there were two articles side by side.

The one on the left was the story of the continuing drought in Somalia and the terrible suffering and human cost that drought is exacting.

The article was accompanied by a shocking picture of a starving child.

The article on the right was about the latest toy for the rich, which is a small portable submarine.

And of course this article too had a picture of this very expensive plaything for those who just do not know what to do with their wealth.

It seemed to me that these two articles sitting side by side were very much a commentary, a arable if you will, of all that is wrong in our society and world at this present time.

For me they symbolised the political left and the political right – just as they were placed in the paper. The left often seeks a more community focused approach that seeks to uphold the rights of the poor and the marginalised.

The right on the side of personal wealth and individualism...

And these two articles, sitting side by side, also presented to me a picture of the dreadful disparity that exists across our globe at this present time.

There have always been the rich and the poor; but the rich seem to have got richer and the poor more desperate...

...and I believe that desperation was eloquently expressed in the recent riots and unrest across the UK.

It seems to me that we are increasingly moving into revolutionary times.

When people feel helpless and hopeless they have little to lose if they rise up and revolt.....

Today we have celebrated baptism.

Four children were signed with the sign of the cross – they were marked, as we have all been marked – as part of the community of Christ.

And that community is a revolutionary community.

As Paul said we are not marked to be ‘conformed to this world’, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect...

And we are baptised not to be individualistic, but rather we are baptised into the Body of Christ; we are individually members of one another – as Paul says, ‘...we who are many, are one body in Christ.’

Yes we are baptised and marked **into community** to seek and discern the mind of God and to work for the common good of the whole body.

Later in this celebration we make that very declaration: ‘Although we are many, we are one as the Body of Christ, for we all share the one bread.’

And the gospel reading reminds us that in Christ we have been given ‘The keys to the kingdom of heaven...’ and that ‘whatever we bind on earth will be bound in heaven and whatever we loose on earth will be loosed in heaven...’

These words of course are an echo of the Lord’s Prayer that we recite ad nauseam – ‘...your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.’

Baptism has marked us as a community of God, as members of the Body of Christ.

And that is our function – to testify to the presence of Christ in our world.

Last night on the Rialto channel I watched a wonderful New Zealand film called *The Insatiable Moon*.

It was the story of a boarding house in Ponsonby that catered for older men who were part of the mental health system.

Some of the more affluent neighbours began to object to the presence of these men in their streets and wanted the boarding house closed. The council issue a notice to say the house is overcrowded and unless they upgrade the facility it will have to close in two months.

The local 'vicar' is of course on their side and organises a public meeting.

One of the residents thinks he is the second son of God and he believes God has told him how to save their home. He buys a Lotto ticket.

When it does not win he goes into psychotic episode crashes the public meeting and eventually dies, but his actions have deeply affected some of the local residents.

He then 'appears' to another resident on a park bench who is on a drinking binge and gives him a cold meat pie to eat...it is a very humorous scene.

The film was of course is a parody of the story of Christ set in Ponsonby...

At the end of the film an anonymous donor gives a \$100,000.00 cheque and the house is saved.

If you get a chance, see it – *The Insatiable Moon...*

The gulf between the starving child and the submarine is huge, but that same scenario plays itself out time and time again in cities and in communities in various guises and situations around the globe and on our own doorstep.

Policies have been and are being formed here in New Zealand which are enabling the rich to get richer while the poor languish with feelings of helplessness and are being pushed further to the edges.

This is election year - I will say no more!!

The challenge for us the baptised is to discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

And let us never forget that we are one body in Christ and individually we are members one of another....

...and that we are a revolutionary people that can change the world...