

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

The idea that we can somehow penetrate the mind of God, and thus share God's thoughts, in one way defines the whole issue of the mystery of God's "otherness". We are part of a created universe and integral with it. We are immersed in it and however much we like to think that we can separate ourselves from it and to stand apart from it, to order or control its destiny, the fact is that we cannot. Our ability to influence and change our environment has its impact, such that what we do and the way we act can and does have its consequences, but all of these actions are not in any way "creative". They are, however grand or inspired we might like to think them, still conditioned and bound by our nature as part of the created order. They are internal, of our world, ultimately of our universe. To put into perspective the psalmist tells us: *When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you arranged what is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?*

Attempting to contemplate the mind of God is therefore immediately set against the fact of our condition as created beings. All the concepts that we form and all the ideas we generate confront a barrier that locks them in to our surroundings. Our minds and our thoughts are regulated by what is around us and they are de facto limiting and frustrating. St Paul spoke of this in his Letter to the Romans last week when he expressed the frustration that creation itself experiences as it waits to be set free from the shackles that bind it to its bondage to decay. But our liberation has come, our gateway into the mind of God has been unlocked, the barriers that barred our pathway have been swept away, and our minds liberated through the mind, the thoughts, the deeds of Jesus Christ. Albeit that this liberation comes about through another mystery, it is one which unfolds in our history, within the sphere of our capacity to experience. Jesus was our flesh and blood and he spoke to us in words which expressed our longing to encounter God's "otherness" in human terms. A seed sown in the ground, a treasure found in a field, a pearl of great price, yeast mixed with flour; darnel amongst the wheat. These are the simple concepts which he spoke of and which he used to contemplate the vastness of the created world alongside the sheer bounty of both the love that caused it and brought it into being. Now here's a thought and one that perhaps illustrates the quote at the beginning of this piece. The darnel in the field of wheat, could it be that it is you and me and if it is, isn't the response of the sower commensurate with the psalmist's question - *what is man that you should keep him in mind?*

To know when we look out into the infinity of space and consider how small and insignificant we are, that we are loved and cherished by the one who created us opens out for us a window in to the mind of God. *In the Lord there is mercy and redemption* and in those two qualities we can understand that notwithstanding our capacity to do terrible things to our world and to each other, there is salvation. We can know that when we look inside our hearts and find coldness and hate, there is an invitation to change and turn away from violence. We can be assured that even if we feel helpless and of no value, a burden ruining other people's lives, contemplating assisted dying, we are in God's mind beautiful. Listen anyone who has ears!