

Sermon for Sunday 4th August 2024, Granborough Church

TRINITY 10

By Rev Petra Elsmore

New Testament Reading

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it[a] says: 'When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.'

9 (What does 'he ascended' mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions[c]? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

THE OLYMPIC QUIZ

1) Who is the founder of the Modern Olympic Games?

- a) Gustaf Johan Schartau
- b) Baron Pierre de Coubertin,
- c) Juan Antonio Samaranch

2) When did the first Modern Olympic Games took place?

- a) 1836
- b) 1896
- c) 1906

3) Which of the following sports were never part of the Olympic Games?

- a) Tug of War
- b) Darts
- c) Pigeon shooting

4) Which year was historic because ALL countries sent at least one female athlete for the

first time?

- a) Atlanta 1996
- b) Sydney 2000
- c) London 2012

5) The five colours of the Olympic rings stand for the five continents

TRUE OR FALSE?

6) How many medals has GB Team won so far?**TALK**

I remember, when I was a kid, our TV literally did not get switched off during Olympic Games, my mum used to have it on all the time (sometimes through the night depending on where the games took place).

Does anyone know the original motto of the Olympic Games as it been introduced in 1894 by the newly formed International Olympic Committee (IOC). It was “Citius, Altius, Fortius”— “Faster, Higher, Stronger.” In 1908 Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin spoke another words that became famous: “The most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well.” Do they sound familiar to you? I remember as a kid being told, it is not important if you win, but that you give it your best... whether that was in sport or with my school work, my dad always used to say: “just do your best and you will do well...”

Following the pandemic, the motto of the Olympic Games has been amended in 2021—to “Citius, Altius, Fortius—Communis,” adding the word “Together” to express the global unity needed in the pandemic times.

But the idea of togetherness and unity has always been part of the Olympic ethos even before our experience of pandemic.

The Olympic Games were always about athletes coming together from every continent... to promote peace and unity through sport...

The verse that I was coming back to again and again this week is make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

St Paul has written the letter that is known to us as the letter to the Ephesians around 61AD. It's now believed to be written as a circular letter, a letter which was send round to several churches in Minor Asia rather than being intended for a specific congregation with a specific situation. Paul himself was under house arrest in Rome. In the first part of the letter Paul explores the story of the Gospel, how all history came to its climax in Jesus, and the beginning of the church, a community of followers of Jesus. In the second half (Ephesians 4-6), Paul explores how the Gospel should impact on the way we live our lives, personally, in our community, and within our families.

Paul talks about Unity that comes from finding our place within the church community, being united by the Spirit in one body, knowing our place, our gifts, accepting the grace given to us in Jesus Christ and in love, sharing that grace with one another and supporting one another.

He urges us to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. To be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love and make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (V1-3)

This week we have witnessed the brutal attack in Southport, in which 3 young innocent children lost their lives and other children and adults were left injured. We followed the news and witnessed a community coming together in shock, in grief, in determination to support friends, family those deeply affected by the trauma.

But we also witnessed how riots spread through many cities of our country and it was shocking, to see the level of hate and misinformation taking place online and its impact on many communities throughout the country. The thought that the tragic event in Southport should be used to encourage and fuel continuing violence is for most people beyond comprehension.

But we must ask, what does it take for individuals and different communities to interact with each other without fear, hatred or suspicion?

When you look at the reading from Ephesians it is there... it's about each one of us knowing our place in life. It's knowing ourselves as children of God, feeling secure in our relationship with God. Knowing our place within circle of family and friendships, within a community, being valued, appreciated and knowing that we play a part, appreciating each other's uniqueness, gifts and being prepared to work together, to build each other up in love.

Unfortunately, many people don't know their place or value, they don't know how to build communities which reflect love, respect and common purpose. Something is missing for many people.

Paul's words are absolutely crucial to an understanding how to live a life which promotes unity, which gives hope of world which is fair and just place for people to live in. But we need to follow his instruction. As Christians we live by example, and we try to be examples for others.

As we follow the Olympic Games, let's use the symbol of 5 interlocked rings, a symbol of unity, symbol of nations coming together to promote peace through sport, to pray for unity and peace within our relationships, within our communities, our nation and in our world. Amen.

COLLECT FOR TRINITY 10

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

OLYMPIC QUIZ: Correct answers: 1b,2b, 3b, 4a, 5 False (the number of rings stands for the number of continents, however, the colour of the rings stand for the colours of flags of the different nations taking part in the first Olympic games. 6) 33