

Contemporary Reading: from *The Collage of God*,
by Mark Oakley

All speech about the Holy One is costly for it demands penitence of us at each and every turn.

Christian liberality will never be defined by how a person votes in this or that debate. 'Many who think themselves emancipated are merely unbuttoned.' It is more a matter of the approach to the debate and to those others taking part. It is a *procedural* liberalism more than a *substantive* liberalism that will hold us together.

...

Christian liberality, then, is essential if we are to make friendships amongst our own Christian communities and with those outside them. It does not mean a free for all and a disregard for authority. An informal attitude towards our tradition is nothing less than arrogant. Theology is like sewing: you need to knot the thread. It means allowing room for growth and change in individual hearts and minds, and in the Church's life and faith as embodied in the years that pass. It will never simply be the Church's roots that give it shape and allow it to continue on; it will be the liberal and generous momentum of the whole organism which will permit it adventure, branching out and allowing more birds, of different shapes and sizes, to nest in its leaves. The sooner we stop feeling embarrassed by this the better.

In Iris Murdoch's *Henry and Cato*, we are told by the story's priest that he sometimes feels that one day he might receive some perfect illumination about absolutely everything but he knows that this is an illusion and that 'the point is one will never get to the end of it, never get to the bottom of it, never, never. And that never, never, never is what you must take for your hope and your shield and your most glorious promise'.

For the challenge of Indigenous knowledge

We give thanks.

New Testament Reading: A reading from Acts 1:1-11

In my earlier account, Theophilus, I dealt with everything that Jesus had done and taught, from the beginning until the day he was taken up, after he had given instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After the Passion, Jesus appeared alive to the apostles—confirmed through many convincing proofs—over the course of forty days, and spoke to them about the reign of God.

On one occasion, Jesus told them not to leave Jerusalem. “Wait, rather, for what God has promised, of which you have heard me speak,” Jesus said. “John baptized with water, but within a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

While meeting together they asked, “Has the time come, Rabbi? Are you going to restore sovereignty to Israel?”

Jesus replied, “It’s not for you to know times or dates that Abba God has decided. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; then you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.”

Having said this, Jesus was lifted up in a cloud before their eyes and taken from their sight. They were still gazing up into the heavens when two messengers dressed in white stood beside them. “You Galileans—why are you standing here looking up at the skies?” they asked. “Jesus, who has been taken from you—this same Jesus will return, in the same way you watched him go into heaven.”

For the stories of the early Christian community,

Thanks be to God!

Gospel: A reading from the Gospel of Luke 24:44-53

Then Jesus said to them, "Remember the words I spoke when I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the psalms had to be fulfilled."

Then Jesus opened their minds to the understanding of the scriptures, saying, "That is why the scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. In the Messiah's name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of all this.

"Take note: I am sending forth what Abba God has promised to you. Remain here in the city until you are clothed with the power from on high."

Then Jesus took them to the outskirts of Bethany, and with upraised hands blessed the disciples. While blessing them, the saviour left them and was carried up to heaven. The disciples worshiped the risen Christ and returned to Jerusalem full of joy. They were found in the Temple constantly, speaking the praises of God.

For the good news of Divine love,

Thanks be to God!