

# Of Life and Death

Rev Chris Rankine

November is the season of the kingdom; it is the time when the Church reminds us of our mortality. It starts with All Saints Day and continues with themes of life and death, heaven and hell. There is a natural element to this; the end of the year approaches, and much of nature around us seems dead; the fact that Remembrance Sunday falls in this time is coincidence, but still it echoes the season.

There's a cheerful theme - but why shouldn't it be?! Yes, we are thinking about death – that's allowed, after all we're all headed there sooner or later. We're thinking about where we are headed - you can forget being an angel on a cloud – it isn't going to happen, I can't think of anything more boring! Adrian Plass in one of his books, talks of heaven like this; think of your perfect day...what would you be doing, what would you not be doing!...heaven has got to be at least as good as that, in fact heaven is so good that you wouldn't think twice about giving up your perfect day in order to be there!

It is very healthy to think about death; it gets us thinking about life! It is a common thing, that those who know that they are dying change their priorities. They see much more clearly what is most important; the time they spend with family and friends becomes more precious, the time they put into giving to others more important; for many it puts fights and upsets into perspective and forgiveness breaks out, debts are wiped out and generosity becomes a theme.

Strange, it sounds almost like heaven has broken in before death. Curious that Jesus wanted us to proclaim "the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." In Jesus heaven did break out, people were healed, the dead raised, those held captive set free. But that wasn't just for then, the power of Jesus' resurrection is that heaven continues to break in, and the church is to continue to proclaim that and to enable that, heaven is to continue to break into our lives today and every day. You may think that the parish vision for 2014 is pie in the sky, but right or wrong, it is about the things of heaven breaking in.

The final Sunday of November is the Feast of Christ the King. We are called to remember our Lord and our destination; that as we continue toward death and life, we shall continually seek to enable heaven to break into our lives and the life of our community.