

REFLECTION FOR ADVENT 2 - MARSEILLE CHAPLAINCY 2018

Letting go and letting God.

Advent is a good time to realign ourselves with God and His plans for our life.

Do you have your life all mapped out with what you will be doing, where you will be living for the next few years. Perhaps you have plans for your retirement and a bucket list to complete before you die? Or plans, perhaps hopes and fears, for the future of you and your family?

Before coming to Marseille Steve and I spent a lot of time decluttering our house in preparation to selling it having found our dream house in France that we want to buy. No-one has shown any interest in buying our house yet despite changing estate agents and reducing the price. When we saw the house in France, apart from us falling in love with it, we both had a sense that it was where God wants us to be, so we are frustrated by the lack of interest. Have we got it wrong? Are we prepared to let go of our dream? That is the challenge for us. Letting go and letting God reveal His plans afresh is never easy especially when one has been disappointed or let down.

It reminded me of the story of Abraham who had been promised by God that he would be the father of many nations with countless descendants – as numerous as the stars in heaven or grains of sand on the seashore. But Abraham and Sarah were childless which seemed like a major problem to the fulfilment of that promise. They tried to solve the problem their own way by Sarah allowing Abraham to father a child with her slave girl Hagar. But that son was not the son of the promise. God visited Abraham and Sarah and renewed the promise he had made by telling them that Sarah, although passed the age of childbearing, would indeed have a son Isaac. In due course Isaac was born and became the most precious son to them. The son through whom God would fulfil his promise.

Abraham's moment of "letting go and letting God" came when God asked him to take Isaac and sacrifice him at a place of God's choosing. I don't know how Abraham could even begin to set out on that journey. A journey that would end all his hopes and dreams. But Abraham had great faith and set out with Isaac to do just as God had asked. You probably know the end of the story if not look it up in Genesis 22. Just as Abraham is about to kill his son Isaac, an angel stops him and a ram caught up in a nearby thicket is sacrificed instead. God renews his covenant promise to Abraham and the rest, as they say, is history.

"Letting go and letting God" is the best way forward for any of us on our journey of faith.

Many years ago I had a dream – one of those dreams that you wake up and remember in detail. In this dream I was sitting painting a wonderful panoramic view. The painting was going rather well I thought. Then I was aware that Jesus had drawn alongside me and was looking at the painting and at the view and chuckling. "What are you laughing at?" I asked. Jesus moved me out of the way and began to add to my painting. "There is so much more" he said as he added vistas I had not spotted and even went beyond my limited range of vision to show me more wonderful things. "With me there is no limit and my plans are always more wonderful than any you make" he said.

So trust God with your dreams. Let them go to him and let him show you **his plans** as we seek to realign our lives with God this Advent.

This is the second of four reflections for each week of Advent. I pray that they will be a blessing to you. Sue Goodwin (One of the Interim Chaplains).