

“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me”

There is a story told of Cardinal Basil Hume, when he was serving as Abbott in Ampleforth Monastery. It was his day off and he was spending it in the gardens tending to roses and pulling weeds. Dressed in the appropriate manner as he was approached by a stranger in a hurry. He asked the gentleman “Can I help you”. “Not really said the chap” in an offhand sort of way “I need to see the Abbott. “Come this way” said Basil Hume. Then took the chap up to his office and sat him down.

Cardinal Hume then went next door and changed from his gardening scruffs and into his Abbotts robes.

Then he walked back into his office and asked the astonished chap

“Can I help you?”

“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me”

The woman in the town centre with the inappropriate coat, the tired expression and the standard grown out hairstyle.

That is the mother of two sons. She is loved beyond even their understanding. She has in the past sacrificed, and celebrated. She is wonderful.

The young man with the tattoos, and shaved head.

This is the brother who will always help. The man who as a child suffered, but who survived. This is the victim, the victor, the lover, the fool.

That girl with the expression which is well beyond her years. She too had dreams, as once her teenage looks allowed her to flirt quite ridiculously. She too believed that for her it would be different. This belief she now has for the baby in the pram she pushes.

Who is it you are speaking to?

“Can I help you?”

“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me”

She did not want to let them know. It was much more convenient to believe in the pretence. This mother was not the woman of twenty years ago. She is beautiful but different. Indeed much more tired.

After twenty years of marriage there did not seem to be much to discover or learn. Patterns of behaviour were safe places to live. Indeed imposed limitations on ambitions maintained the status quo. But he was a frustrated line dancer, and she a queen of the artistic world.

The conversation of brothers never moved beyond things that did not matter. No matter how passionately they were expressed. But he was dying of cancer, and they would never have guessed.

Who it you are speaking to

“Can I help you?”

“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me”

He would not believe he deserved anything more. So he never looked into his own heart. But had he done so, he would have found so much beauty.

There always seemed to be something else that was needed. When she looked it was always to what had not yet been done. So she always missed the celebration and the fun.

When they looked in the mirror they saw only the mask.

Not the friend, the support, the faithful lover. They never saw grandfather. They never saw the encounter they lived. The free and daily gift of life. The ridiculous joy. No, they saw the mask.

Who is it you are speaking to?

“Can I help you?”

“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me”

The divine living presence is here among us

Learn to see beyond your prejudices and preconceptions

Learn to see the wonder, the beauty

Learn to see the face of God

“Anyone who welcomes one of these little children in my name, welcomes me; and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me”