

# Reflections for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

## A change of heart

In response to life's worries, hurts and troubles, there is a temptation to build up our defences, so that slowly, over time, we 'harden our hearts', and eventually find that we can no longer take the risk of living with open hearts – open to God, open to others, and open to life.

One of the readings suggested for this Sunday, from the Old Testament book of the prophet Ezekiel (chapter 36 verses 24 to 28), includes this promise from God:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh

This reminds me of a favourite quotation that I have known for many years, from a book by C.S. Lewis, called *The Four Loves*:

There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything, and your heart will certainly be wrung, and possibly be broken.

If you want to make sure of keeping it intact, you must give your heart to no one, to nothing ... avoid all entanglements; lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket – safe, dark, motionless, airless – it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable.

The Christian faith is not about making ourselves safe from hurt, it is not about a hard, dry life that is without risk – for that truly would be to have a 'heart of stone', and, in a very real way, not to live at all.

The Christian faith calls us to find the strength to love, and to be prepared to take the risk of being hurt – that is, to have a 'heart of flesh', a heart truly alive to God, to one another, and to life.

Revd John Waller

God of love, who is love,  
melt my indifferent heart of stone.  
Open my eyes to your children's suffering  
and lift my head to see your perfect love again.  
Work a miracle in my life  
that through your Spirit  
and my softened heart's obedience  
I might give my very self to keep hope alive,  
and to be the change you require. Amen.