

THE BACK OF THE BULLETIN

Trust

The other day I saw Emily investigating her father's face. Six weeks old, she was wide-eyed, and otherwise quite impassive; but she was also completely absorbed in the task. I don't know what the theorists have to say about babies at that age, but I thought there was something very important going on for both of them. She wasn't anxious, being recently fed; but she was deeply interested in someone with whom she felt at home. There was something inside her that was *drinking in*, as fiercely busy as she'd been a little earlier in the physical feeding that means so much to babies. You couldn't break her gaze.

Five Weeks Old

We enter the fifth week of Eastertide in much the same situation. We are still in the aftermath of the Crucifixion, and the trauma it brought with it; you don't look to recover from the Cross, any more than Jesus is raised without its wounds in his hands and feet and side. It changes you, and you carry it with you afterwards. Those who meet the risen Lord (check on it) are all *wounded by the Passion first*. It is the necessary ticket without which one cannot begin the journey. But it is the Resurrection that absorbs us in these seven weeks: the glorious convalescence by which we absorb healing, a hope deeper than the death we have encountered, deeper than any death we will ever encounter. Like Emily, we know we are in the most important possible place, and that here we can be made safe.

Trust In God Still, Trust In Me

The apposition is eloquent: trust in God because you always have; trust in me, because I have proved to you that I deserve your trust. That Jesus went to the Cross for us means there is no human gift he will not sacrifice for us. That he comes to us in this aftermath proves that he comes in the power of God. Our trust in God is now expanded, and made specific, by our loving his Son, by our following of him who fed, healed, and reconciled us, and gathered us into the extraordinary communion of the Church: the crucified and risen one, who brings us comfort and the Holy Spirit.

Like A Little Child

Trust is so hard in an unloving world. *The scorched child fears the fire*; and people grow a shell, a carapace to protect them from the risk of having to trust others. This is such a damaging

thing to do, so final a rejection of hope, that we feel ashamed of it. Being ashamed, we run to our own defence, and justify our defence-mechanisms by pointing to the lunacy of trust. We mock the gentle and vulnerable as despicably weak, and we meditate on the heroic figure that wins his battles and slaughters his foes, pays the world in its own hard coinage, and knows how to make himself safe. If it weren't so there would be fewer Kosovos and East Timors and Ulsters to be suffered. It is to this ugly condition that Jesus' words are addressed: *Unless you change, and become like a little child, you will never enter the Kingdom of God*. It is such a privilege to see "a little child" and to experience that intense gaze of a new human being learning trust. For a father and mother it must be the most powerful thing in the world. We should let it heal us and restore to us the real sense of what our humanity means. We must learn to cross eyes with God, and to let the trust build between us, until we can face the world untroubled by our endless insecurity. Emily, on this day of her baptism, is ready to do this. In Easter we can be like her.

I Am Going To The Father

Jesus' human confidence in God is far stronger than his fear of the Cross or his anxiety for the disciples. It enables him to present himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life for all of us. That includes the Kosovars, and Emily, and us too.

Fr Philip