

**Address given by Lord Rowan Williams at the Memorial Service for Roy Calvocoressi, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, London, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Not that we loved God, but that he first loved us.”

In that very simple phrase is the heart of the Gospel, because it says to us that love is not an ideal towards which we struggle limply, not a pleasant thought about possible futures, nor a tough task for those with the energy and patience to carry it through. Love is given. Love is already there ahead of us. What we have to do is try to work out how to get there, and how to cope with the overwhelming fact of its being there already.

And if that's true of love, and if the God of Love is the God of Peace, the same story applies when we talk about peace and peacemaking. Is peace an ideal? Is peace a task? Well yes, it's both in a sense of course, but it's also something different, something that has been made - it's there already. The task of the peacemaker is not to invent peace out of whole cloth, but to cope with the overwhelming abundance of God's peace poured out on the earth in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He has made peace between those separated by dividing walls.

In other words, the Christian Peacemaker begins with gratitude, begins with an acknowledgement of what has been done, and what must now be explored and shared. That means also, the Christian peacemaker will have a profound sense of urgency, but very little sense of anxiety.

I expect that all those who knew Roy, will understand that urgency without anxiety is something that might be said about the whole of Roy's extraordinary witness.

Having myself known his name as a matter of legend for many years before I actually met him, the abundant, positive, urgent, energy of the man, was something that was not coloured by any sense of edge, anger or anxiety. And that sense of something overflowing, something rising from a deep place where God had already done what mattered, that surely is what we are here to give thanks for today.

Roy demonstrated that it is possible to be a peacemaker because you are grateful for the peace of God within you.

And when people live out of that depth of gratitude then, of course, we are grateful for them, and it is when we are grateful for others that we are most concerned to follow their example. Someone memorably said that a good person is so often somebody who intimidates and depresses you, but a holy person is somebody who excites and energises you.

And the difference surely lies in the fact that the holy person knows that what matters been done, and therefore lives out of an urgency without anxiety, and therefore makes us want to do what we can out of gratitude for them, just as they helped out of gratitude to God.

Today, in this event, we are carrying on that handing on of the baton of gratitude. Roy's overwhelming gratitude for what God had done, and was doing and would do, prompted so many to share his deep, incarnational, costly, joyful service, to those forgotten about. And here are we picking up the infection of gratitude, saying thanks for him, thanks to God, thanks, dare we say it, thanks for what God will do in us. A bold enough claim, but otherwise why are we here?

And of course, it's that sense of gratitude that so often takes people into the hardest places. Not a heroic ideal of doing sterling service to your maker, but gratitude for what God is going to give you

when you go and sit alongside those with the deepest need, sit alongside those most left out. It's gratitude that takes you there, it's gratitude that keeps you there, because you know that God has done what matters, and you know that God waits for you there, and you're grateful to him for keeping that appointment.

"Blessed are the peacemakers" says our Lord. And of course, in all the beatitudes, there is something coming through that is more than just an ideal to be followed, but a glimpse, a fragment of God's own life taking root, through us. The God who is himself hungry and thirsty for justice. The God who himself becomes poor and humble for our sake. The God who himself is merciful. The God who himself makes peace, and who is persecuted for the sake of justice. That God who has made peace, and is making peace, is the God we love and serve, and for whom we give thanks. The God whose presence as God, as peace, is what moves us and holds us to the great task that we undertake as the disciples of Jesus, bringing his peace, bringing his love.

Not that we first loved, not that we first made peace, not that we first thought of a brilliant moral idea to release on the whole world, but that God has done what matters. We have to absorb it, we have to share it, we have to radiate it through our own gratitude and, God help us, we have to live so that other people will give thanks for us. A deeply intimidating thought.

But because of Roy, and those like him, we know it can be done.