

THINK
PIECE

LETTING GO of our complacency

Jesus' thirstiness is a cry of solidarity

The Revd Dr Raj Bharat Patta, presbyter in the United Stockport Methodist Circuit, says we can only help the world when we let go of complacency

At Easter time, Christians reflect on the Cross of Jesus Christ and seek its relevance for the world. In a time of rapid climate change, we are called to let go of our human greed and to care for God's creation, which today is bruised and battered due to humanity's selfishness. In such a context, the words of Jesus from the Cross, particularly when he cries out "I thirst" (John 19:28), resonate today with vulnerable communities in the majority world who bear the brunt of climate change. Plagued by drought, they are calling on powerful people to let go of their dominance over creation and the powerless. In the context of Gnosticism, to which John addresses his gospel, the divine was understood to be transcendent, to be far above all physical pain and needs. When

John records how Jesus was thirsty, he breaks with the idea that Jesus was above physical need. Saying that Jesus, the Son of God, cried out for a drink of water was groundbreaking. It affirmed that Jesus died on the Cross thirsty. His shout for a drink bridged the gap between the divine being and the fully human Jesus. We see Jesus on his Cross identifying with thirsty people throughout the world and a thirsty creation. People reading John's Gospel might have been perplexed. Jesus had already been introduced as 'living waters', so how could he become thirsty? Can a living spring be drained out? Can perennial waters dry away? These would have been some of the questions that John's audience might have had. But if Jesus were above pain or thirst, his incarnation would not have been



real. On the contrary, Jesus expressed his real human need. Neither the sour vinegar offered by the crowd around the Cross nor the tears of heaven could quench Jesus' thirst. He died thirsty.

Life-giving water

Jesus' thirstiness is a cry of solidarity with the thirsty earth and with those who literally and metaphorically need water.

It is a cry of solidarity with all those dry rivers and with all those enduring drought. Jesus' cry is also a call to quench thirst of different types. When he says that he thirsts, Jesus is warning death and drought that they will be defeated very soon, for showers of new life are to rain in his resurrection. When he says that he thirsts, Jesus is also calling greedy people to repent, for much thirst throughout the world is created by them.

In the context of climate emergency today, when much of the world is suffering from drought, this cry of Jesus from the Cross challenges us to address thirst and those who are thirsty. The call for us as a Church is to engage in caring for our creation. The season of Lent calls us to repent of our human greed and save our creation.

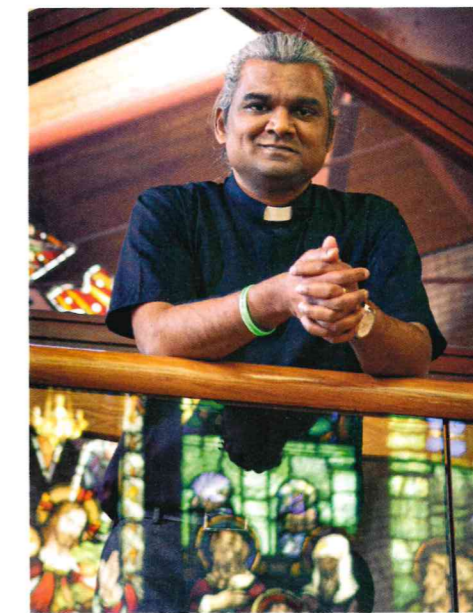
Springs of new hope

Although Jesus died thirsty on the Cross, God raised him back to life. The risen Jesus appeared to the disciples and invited them to breakfast, where he inspired them with hope and confidence. As a Church, the call for us is to let go of our complacency and learn humility so that we can build just and inclusive communities and work to address issues such as climate change, poverty, homelessness, and class and gender discrimination.

We, as a Church, are called to become community hubs where vulnerable people can find a welcoming space and hospitality. At Easter, our church communities are called to be springs of new hope for all the thirsty and suffering people around us. We are called to quench the thirst of vulnerable communities and to care for the world. In pursuit of this, let justice flow down like a never-ending stream that is clear, pure and life-giving. May we become the tributaries of justice and life to all those in need. Let us awake to be the showers of life.

Letting go of our complacency often involves recognising the many times we have rejected our Saviour. We have all turned away from Jesus, assuming we could handle things on our own. But Jesus still longs to draw us in. This Easter time, let us reflect on how we can exchange our pride for his crucifixion, and strive to follow him faithfully.

I wish you all a blessed Easter.



Our church communities are called to be springs of new hope

LETTING GO Question
How is your church being called to let go of complacency and turn back to Jesus?

