WORSHIP WEEK 9.

‘And the trees of the field shall clap their hands……..’ Isaiah 55:12.

How does a tree worship God? Not quite by clapping its hands, but by waving, swaying in the breeze, by putting out fresh new leaves, by taking CO2 out of the air and breathing out oxygen, by growing fruit, by shedding leaves in autumn, by resting and beginning again. By being itself.

How does a sparrow worship God? By using the powers God gave it, to fly, hop, peck, grow, find a mate and build a nest, raise young. By being itself.

How do you worship God? By being yourself. It’s more complicated for us, because we are flawed by sin, but also made in the image of God, and designed for a closer relationship with him than a tree or a sparrow. Our worship is far more than the bits we call church or prayer. We worship God by using the powers God has given us, in walking, talking, relating, working, thinking, being a friend or colleague, growing, loving. By letting God shape us, as He wants us to be, and then being ourselves.

In 1666 in Paris, a man who had been a soldier and a servant was admitted as a lay brother into the Order of barefooted Carmelites. He was called Brother Lawrence. For the rest of his life he attempted to live in a permanent state of awareness of God. He knew that his mind would wander, but he didn’t let that trouble him. He didn’t sit in his cell and pray, because he was the friary cook, and his duties included buying food from the merchants in Paris, so he was not cut off from life. He found that his work time became like his prayer time. He wrote a little book, called The Practice of the Presence of God. He wrote: ‘… in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are calling at the same time for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity as if I were on my knees at the Blessed Sacrament.’

Yesterday was Pentecost Sunday, when we remember the Holy Spirit poured out on the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. The Spirit of Jesus is just as active today as he was then. He is not only interested in the big events, but in transforming the nuts and bolts of your daily life. Brother Lawrence found that his work was worship. What is your work today? Focus on God in the clatter of your kitchen, as you hang the washing, in the multi-tasking of your workplace, as you phone or zoom or click *send*. Be yourself, every moment in the presence of God.

*Produced by John Wilkins on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins). You can find more information on the Circuit Holy Habits Programme on the Sheffield Methodist Circuit website and also the Sheffield Methodist Circuit Facebook page.*