**Trust into me**

**John 14:1-14**

I have to confess that there are two words of which I am extremely suspicious. In fact those two words are the equivalent to me of a high alert warning, and those two words are ”trust me”. It seems to me that whenever people start a speech with “trust me”, whether they are trying to convince you to vote for them, to make you do something or to buy something of them, the first thing you should do is run, run as far away from the speaker as possible.

“Trust me, I know all there is to know about this, trust me I have the solution to your problem, trust me this is exactly what you want, trust me I know where you are coming from” ... Really? As far as I am concerned the more the speaker insists I can trust him, the more untrustworthy he probably is.

For to really trust someone you need more than a couple of words.

To really trust someone, and I mean trust them with your life, the words “trust me“ are not enough. You can only really trust someone if you know them personally, if you have a relationship with them.

I know that not all parents deserve the trust of their children, and that sadly too many children suffer because their parents are not trustworthy, but ideally we trust our parents because of who they are and how they act towards us. We trust them because they have a loving relationship with them, because they look after us, feed us and teach us. We trust them because they show us through their own lives that we **can** trust them. We trust them because we know they love us. Yet without that relationship the words “trust me” are highly suspicious.

Jesus of course is not a stranger to his disciples. He has a deep and loving, relationship with them. But more importantly, as he prepares them for his own death and departure, he actually doesn’t use the words “trust me”, he says “trust **in** me”, or even “trust into me”.

Now this extra little word “into” makes a big difference, because through that word Jesus is saying trust in the person you know, trust in what you have seen, trust in our relationship. Trust in what I have done and what I am about to do.

Trust in God always, as you have seen me do, for it is only when you trust in God in this way that you will be able to cope with what lies ahead of you, it is only if you trust in God always, and fully, that you will be able to be my disciples.

Trust also into me, that is, trust in all I have taught you, and find your strength, your courage, your guidance in your relationship with me. Trust in my ongoing presence in you.

You are not trusting in someone you don’t know, you are trusting in the one who knows you and accepts you, the one who loves you no matter what, the one who has shown you the way to the Father.

Trust into me

Essential words for a group of frightened and uncertain disciples who soon will be starting off on a journey into the unknown.

But though the journey is unknown the destination is quite clear: the destination is our Father’s House, the destination is Home, because to be with God our Father, is to be home.

Now though this passage from John is often read at funerals, and though it brings much comfort and assurance to the bereaved as it seems to confirm that in heaven there is room for us all and that Jesus is preparing a place for us and our loved ones, one can wonder if this is really the meaning, or at least the **only** meaning, of Jesus’ words.

Is Jesus speaking of life after death? Or is he speaking of life before death?

Let’s remember that Jesus is , at this stage in the Gospel, instructing his disciples about continuing his work once he is no longer with them. And to me it would be strange to talk about life after death if you want your disciples to be very much alive and active. Why would Jesus promise the disciples that they will do great things in his name, if his focus in his farewell discourse is on life after death.

Furthermore in the Gospel of John the Kingdom of God is not just a kingdom we reach after death it is a kingdom that already starts on earth in the here and now. God’s house, the home of his love, is already here. And so it seems more likely that the many dwelling places Jesus is speaking of are the places the disciples will find on their **journey** home rather than once they have arrived.

It is on our journey as disciples, as we work at becoming more Christ like, on our journey to calling God home, that Jesus promises us many dwelling places to rest.

Trust into me.

The Greek word for dwelling place, *Mone,*  is actually something quite specific. For in NT context a *mone* was a Caravanserai ; a shelter for the night for traders and other travellers. A place to be fed and find rest, a place of safety for sure but also a place one would **leave** the next morning.

In my Father’s house, on your journey to be fully at home with and in God, there are many dwelling places, many places of sanctuary, places to refuel.

Jesus said:

“Come unto me all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest”

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry”

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink”

In our Father’s house, as we follow in Jesus’ footsteps and become more like him trusting him fully, there are many dwelling places, many places to find rest and reconnect with God, many places where we will find safety. And it is so that we too can become one with God, that Jesus is going to prepare a place for us.

Life was hard in the small Berber settlement near the Atlas mountains and when his youngest son died at the age of only three trough malnourishment, Samir made up his mind. Enough was enough. He would leave his wife Fousia and their remaining 3 children behind and go and work in that far away country somewhere North. His cousin had left a few years earlier and he said there was plenty of work there and life was safe.

That evening Samir said goodbye to his beloved Fousia and their young children. And as he held Fousia in his arms he murmured: “don’t be afraid my love, I will prepare a place for you and the children and when our new home is ready, I’ll come back for you and take you there. Trust in me, and in the mean time, bring up our children and tell them about me. I will send you money whenever I can, I won’t forget you, I promise.”

Then Samir left and started on his difficult and painful journey. The first years were hard but Samir kept sending money and letters to Fousia and the children whenever he could. In due course he found a suitable home. He bought the best furniture he could afford, the all important second hand washing machine, and beautiful curtains in Fousia’s favourite shade of pink. Then one day at last he returned to the small settlement near the Atlas mountains. He picked up his family and took them to the home he had prepared for them. The home where they would finally live together as a family.

The years Samir had spent working and preparing the family’s home, were reflections of his love for his wife and children. He had made sure they knew he loved them through the many letters he had written and he had prepared their home, through hard work and self-sacrifice, a place where Fousia and the children would feel happy, safe and loved.

But how was Jesus going to prepare a place for his disciples? How did he prepare a place of safety and love for us?

Our place in our Father’s house, was prepared by Jesus through his crucifixion, death and resurrection. After all that is the topic of Jesus’ farewell discourse to his disciples: his upcoming death and resurrection and what this will mean for his disciples.

Jesus was going to prepare a place for his disciples and for all of us in his Father’s house, he was going to repair our relationship with God through the cross. For it was only through taking our sins upon himself that Jesus could give us eternal access to God. Because in doing so he showed us God’s love, he showed us what it means to trust into God, he showed us how one shares God’s love.

And so it is that in preparing that place, not just for his disciples but for all of us, that Jesus is the way to God’s love, the way to unity with Him.

That way may be long and at times we may get discouraged, but Jesus reminded his disciples that there are many shelters, many places of sanctuary on the way. We, like the travellers in the ANE, need rest and food, we need to stop and refuel whether through worship, through outreach, through encounter or solitude, but as long as we trust in Christ and acknowledge his presence in these dwelling places, we will find the strength, the encouragement to continue on our journey, to continue on the way Jesus showed; the way of love and sacrifice which is the way to God, the way home.

So Jesus says to each one of us: “Trust into me, and you will find the way to God’s love, the way home.”