

I know my own and my own know me.

'I know' it's a funny verb to know. English is very unusual in only having one word to know. Other languages- Czech and Italian to name just two, have different verbs to indicate knowing a person or knowing a fact or knowing a skill. We don't. We just know: whether it's the capital of Iceland or who the prime minister is or a childhood friend or how to change a plug fuse. Perhaps because it can have so many meanings, we are remarkably casual with our use of the word. I think of the episode of Fawlty Towers where Sybil, on the phone to her appalling friend Audrey just repeats the phrase 'oh I know' again and again, leading an infuriated Basil to snarl 'well why she's telling you then?' 'I know' is often a place holder. A phrase that doesn't actually mean what it ought to mean. Indeed, there can be no more certain declaration that someone doesn't actually know or want to know than them saying that they do.

On these Sundays after Easter we have a series of readings which focus on this theme of knowledge. Of knowing and being known.

Why? We have already admitted that knowing is a more complex thing than we first thought. What is it that the Bible means by knowing? In part it's about how we recognise God, how we learn to identify what he is like and how he might work in our lives. The reason we have these readings after Easter is because it is the resurrection that is the means by which God chooses to be known as and in Christ. That is to say that the way God wants to be known by us is as the one who has conquered death. The God who wants to get to know us

Knowing of this sort is a two way process. It isn't like knowing a fact, or a recipe or how to do something. This knowing requires the equal other process of being known. As Jesus says: I

know my own and my own know me. It's a reminder that the journey of faith, the adventure that is belief in God is as much a process of opening ourselves up and finding things out about ourselves as it is of learning things about God.

Put another way, because of Jesus Christ- the one who is fully God and fully man- Christianity is a religion which teaches us to know ourselves as much as it teaches us to know God.

I don't mean this 'knowing ourselves' in a trendy modern sense. It isn't a case of self validation or that awful phrase 'self care'. No, this knowing ourselves is

much riskier. It often involves saying that there are things about ourselves that are not as they should be. Areas where we fall short of God and of grace.

But, it has at its heart the fact that we are known by God in our entirety, and he seeks for us to know him. To know is therefore to necessarily admit that we can be fully known. That is a difficult thing, a vulnerable thing. Most of us don't really want to be fully known at all, most of us have parts of our souls which we wish to hide. Yet, as Jesus tells us in today's Gospel: part of what it means to belong to God, to be of God, to be a Christian is to be known.

And in this sense, this knowing is perhaps more easily understood through the lens of love. When you love someone, you necessarily open yourself up to vulnerability, to pain, to loss. You have to allow yourself to be loved in order to love in return.

So it is with God. In the raising of Jesus at Easter God proves that he is fully committed to that two way process of love. So much so that he is prepared to be born, to die and to rise again. To enter into our human cycle of life so that he might fully know what it is to live, but also, in so doing, to open up a life that is much more. A life in which we know and are known, a life in which we might love and be loved, a life which is as fully human as it might possibly be and yet which is also of God.

Being known and being loved is not a risk free exercise, but it is the adventure of a life time, and at the very heart of God's purposes for us. Know that and having known it, then know that nothing can be the same again.

In the name