



**THOUGHTS FOR SUNDAY EVENING
TRINITY 1
14 JUNE 2020**

Eagles' wings
Exodus 19:2-8a, Romans 5:1-8

As I write this I keep breaking off to talk to the Co-operative undertakers at Park Farm to make arrangements for Betty Hill's funeral, and my eye is caught by the phrase in the first lesson set for today, "how I bore you on eagles' wings". In my thoughts for last Sunday I concluded by mentioning the reference in Isaiah to the faithful being born up on eagle's wings, and saying how it was a reading used sometimes at the bedside of the dying. What I was then thinking is that they were words that I longed to say at Betty's bedside, had it been possible for me to be with her. No matter that I was not there, others were, and I offered up the thought as a prayer.

This is now making me cry, so it is just as well I am not preaching on this theme, as I would probably have become inaudible!

The point is, in today's reading from Exodus, as in Isaiah, God's intention for his people, each and every one of them, is that they should be brought into his intimate presence. This is true, even though they, we, are not always the people we ought, or would most like to be. In the Exodus reading the people all rush to answer, "Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do". Well, we know from large chunks of the rest of the Old Testament how long that good intention lasted, and yet the promise holds true.

The second lesson, from Romans, contains the famous passage, "we are justified by faith" that could, with justification, be said to have launched at least the Lutheran Reformation. We also know, that despite Martin Luther's undoubted insights into the divine, yet there were parts of his theology and thinking (particularly what we would regard as his antisemitism), shaped no doubt by his times, that we find unacceptable. He is, what he would certainly have acknowledged himself, an example of what the reading from Romans goes on to say, a sinner for whom Christ died.

We need not, therefore, wait until we have become perfect, to claim the 'eagle's wings' experience. I pray that Betty knows that, and I pray it for you, and for myself.

Clive Lemmon