

Pro-Cathedral

23 March 2022

Welcome

TS Eliot – a very complex poet – also had a sense of humour. He once wrote a poem about a cat with the unusual name Deuteronomy. The opening lines are:

Old Deuteronomy's lived a long time;
He's a Cat who has lived many lives in succession.
He was famous in proverb and famous in rhyme
A long while before Queen Victoria's accession.

And so on. I guess it is unlikely that many of us read the Book of Deuteronomy with any regularity. And yet, it offer a wholesome, even joyful, spirituality.

Topic

Three things strike me from today's reading.

Steps

Firstly, the commandments from God are given not to hem us in, not to impose impossible restrictions but so that we may have life. Often we forget this, even though in John's gospel Jesus says I came that they may have life and have it to the full.

Secondly, the laws of God are given to that we might live wisely. To say that someone is wise is to say something really beautiful and attractive about someone. Our Gospel reading today comes from the Sermon on the Mount, a kind of compendium on wise living.

Thirdly, there is in Deuteronomy a sense of wonder before the gifts of God: *And indeed, what great nation is there that has its gods so near as the Lord our God is to us whenever we call to him.* St Paul has the same sense of wonder in Romans when he writes: "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart." He is quoting from Deuteronomy.

Conclusion

So, we are invited to life in abundance, we are called to be wise and we stand before the gifts of God in wonder. The wholesome and joyful spirituality of Deuteronomy – the book not the cat! – can still inspire us today.