

Our Bible Studies at the recent Marmingatha Episcopate Ministry Conference were led by Rev. Dr. Brian Rosner, the Principal of Ridley College. The theme was “Being Known by God”. In his exploration of this theme, he reminded us that our identity is tied inextricably to our understanding of our identity as children of God. He pointed out that many people spend much of their lives in the pursuit of this question “who am I?”, and that there were many good reasons why a consideration of this question is important to us as Christians.

Rosner began by quoting the American social commentator, Marilynne Robinson, who said that “Nothing is more unfathomable than ourselves, individually and collectively, at any given moment and from the earliest beginning of human time.” The Systematic Theologian, Kevin Vanhoozer goes one step further when he purports that “the human race at the dawn of the third millennium, following the demise of the Christian paradigm and the break-up of modernity, is suffering from a collective identity crisis”.

It is into this somewhat sombre assessment of human understanding that we bring a distinctively Christian approach to the question of “who am I?”. We were reminded of the numerous passages from the Hebrew Scriptures which affirm God’s knowledge of and love for God’s people – passages from Genesis regarding Abraham (“For I have known him”); from Exodus regarding Moses (“I know you by name and you have found favour with me”); and from Jeremiah (“Before I formed in the womb I knew you”), amongst many others.

These promises are echoed in the New Testament when they are emphasised particularly by the Apostle, Paul. For example, as he writes to the Galatians, Paul says “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now you know God—or rather are known by God”, and again to the Corinthians, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known [by God]”.

Further sessions concentrated on the *ways* in which we are known by God, including through Baptism, and the theme of *adoption*. He concluded with the reminder about how our faith carries within it a paradox, when it comes to knowing who we are. This is summed up by Jesus’ reminder to those who would follow him: “Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.” May we die to self, that we would be fully known by God, and be used in God’s service.

May Columba of Iona, Barnabas, and all the Saints walk with you this week... *Sam*