**THANKSGIVING FOR ROSE BAKER | 23.04.2022**

**The comedian Ali G has made the word ‘Respect’ a very familiar one in the English language but it was the very first that come to mind when I wondered what to say about Rose. At every level, and I suspect for all of us, she was deeply loved – and deeply respected.**

**Deeply loved by her close-knit extended family whose pictures feature in the service booklet and especially by her late husband Jim who just thought the world of her. Family life was integral to Rose – from her happy days in Montserrat and her 7am wedding, through the disruptions caused by the volcano’s two eruptions and her separation from the children for long periods while she and Jim, found accommodation in far-away London (no Dogs, no Irish, no blacks…)**

**For some families, those separations might have emptied out those bonds of affection but one of Rose’s great strengths has always been her ability to make friends, her warmth, her genuine care for people and interest in what everyone was doing. How she kept track of all the comings and goings is anyone’s guess – but as we all know it was she, not Jim who had the memory! She loved parties, but the house was never quiet with friends and family sitting eating and drinking at all times of the day and night, people sitting on arm rests or standing at the door because there were never enough chairs! Conversation just flowed like a constant stream and everyone knew they mattered.**

**And deeply respected. To cope with all the massive decisions that had to be made in order to create a new life in London, Rose was never short of an opinion! And an opinion based on firm principles. Whatever water she drank as a child in Montserrat it was definitely not the ‘still’ kind. It was the sort of water that gave her the ability to deal with change and with new ways of working. She was full of energy and solid practical thoughtfulness – and her amazing wardrobe meant that she was always faced those challenges looking beautifully dressed. I can still see her standing, arm in arm with Jim here in Church, to celebrate her big wedding anniversaries – and hear her clear voice as she spoke up in a busy AGM in favour of taking the plunge and rebuilding the organ, and doing it properly.**

**We have already heard great stories about the life she shared with Jim and the family but I want to point to today’s Gospel to round it all off.**

**Jesus is with his closest friends. They have been at a big evangelism rally all day, with the crowds pushing and shoving to get a better view. At the end of the afternoon Jesus draws his nearest and dearest together and he gives them a final word of advice: *Do not worry.***

**This isn’t a Ted talk about personal development as much as a summary of all that he had to share with them. He wanted them to live lives which were completely and totally reliant on God. *What is the point of worrying,* he says, *getting yourself all screwed up and unhappy, when God is giving you everything you need – if you trust him. The birds don’t sow or reap and yet there is enough food for them; the lilies in the fields don’t darn and sew and yet they are more beautiful than Solomon – or even Mrs Solomon – on a good day! And in comparison to the birds and flowers, how much more does God love you? Of course you will be OK; hang on in there: it will come right.***

**And it is that solid trust that underpinned Rose’s life from beginning to end. Life was tough – perhaps more than tough – at various stages. But she lived in that extraordinary confidence that, in the words of Julian of Norwich, *all would be well and all manner of things would be well.***

**Looking at these photographs is surely proof positive that if your fundamental principles are in place, you won’t go far wrong. And hers were the good ones: honesty, hard work, caring about others before herself, overlooking and forgiving the mistakes of others and being up front about what she thought. And a complete trust in God.**

**They are the qualities that have led so many of us – and many others around the world who would have liked to be here – to want to pay our tributes to Rose today.**

**It is out of respect for someone whose genuine warmth and goodness filled whatever space she occupied, and whose faith in a God who would never fail her and her family, was the rock on which everything else was built.**

**May she rest in peace and rise in glory.**